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Perceptions of Responsiveness in Academic Planning in Universities

by

James E. MacLeod

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration with a specialization in the Administration of Postsecondary Education

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 1995

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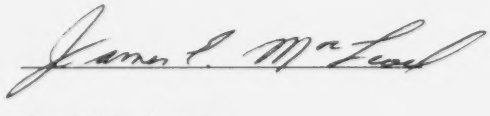

04 July 1995

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Perceptions of Responsiveness in Academic Planning in Universities* submitted by James E. MacLeod in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration with a specialization in the Administration of Postsecondary Education.

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Abstract

Interest in the academic planning processes used by universities has recently increased. This study examined perceptions of academic planning in general, with special emphasis on responsiveness of universities and on the University of Alberta's program initiatives between the years 1988-1993.

The information for the study was gathered from three sources. First, a questionnaire was completed by the vice-presidents (academic) of anglophone universities across Canada. Second, a questionnaire was completed by the non-university members of the Corporate-Higher Education Forum in Canada. Third, interviews were conducted with 17 faculty members and 4 senior academic administrators at the University of Alberta.

Information received from all data sources indicated a desire to have academic planning related to the needs of various stakeholders. However, because these stakeholders are not fully aware of the role, mission, and academic milieu of universities, they are not always sure whether the universities are being responsive to their needs The study's results indicated that the University of Alberta had been responsive between 1988 and 1993, as demonstrated by its adoption of new programs during that time period. Also, the University's responsiveness was evident through an increasing recognition by the professoriate that society's expectations about academic content of courses offered by universities must be considered in the planning and approval of programs.

However, the term "responsiveness" is difficult to define and can have different meanings depending upon the context. Further, the university's roles, complexities, culture, and philosophy are not well known by external agencies and the public at large. Also, external agencies do not always understand the rigorous program planning approach used by academics.

The study's findings led to three additional studies being proposed: (a) a comparative study of planning and development processes in universities, some businesses, and some governments in order to identify the unique aspects of universities' methods; (b) a study to determine ways in which universities might become more aware of, and responsive to, the stated needs of constituents external to these institutions; and (c) an assessment by universities of the strengths and weaknesses of the procedures for dealing with new academic proposals while maintaining a balance between responsiveness and program credibility.

Acknowledgments

Few achievements of significance occur in isolation. Completing the requirements for a PhD, especially the processes of research and dissertation writing, is no exception. Reflecting on the process, I have many people to thank for their guidance, support, and encouragement.

Dr. E. A. (Ted) Holdaway has captured my utmost respect as a doctoral advisor, scholar, and mentor. By using his diligent work ethic as a model, I fulfilled the requirements of my degree--at the outset a daunting task. He holds his students' academic progress and intellectual development as his greatest responsibilities. Also, I thank the members of my supervisory committee--Dr. J. M. Small and Dr. R. G. McIntosh--for their valued input and guidance. The contributions of the additional members of my exam committee--Dr. H. Hodysh, Chair, and Dr. E. C. Lechelt from the University of Alberta, and Dr. A. D. Gregor from the University of Manitoba--are greatly appreciated.

The technical and encouraging support I received from staff at both the University of Alberta--Mrs. C. Prokop and Mrs. T. Kremer--and Acadia University--Mrs. K. Connell and Ms. L. Caldwell--enabled me to avoid many moments of great frustration. Their collective ability to make my mountains into molehills led in a large measure to the completion of this dissertation. The sage reviews of Mrs. G. McCulloch and Dr. J. R. C. Perkin provided a much-appreciated and fresh perspective on the presentation of the information. Also, the special support provided by Mr. I. L. McCulloch is gratefully acknowledged.

The cooperation and input of the faculty members and senior administrators from the University of Alberta who were interviewed for the study made the data collection much easier and contributed to the success of the project. I also thank the

vice-presidents (academic) and the members of the Corporate-Higher Education Forum for their willingness to respond to my questionnaires.

The support of the administration and my colleagues at Acadia University is valued, especially the assistance of Mr. D. Booth, Mrs. A. Booth, and Ms. J. Hooper. Also, the encouragement offered by my professional colleagues in the Canadian Athletic Therapists' Association provided special motivation.

Notwithstanding my notable appreciation to the aforementioned individuals, my greatest gratitude goes to all the members of my extended and nuclear families who supported me. To my wife Janet, and my two daughters, Meghan and Kelsey, I save my absolute and everlasting gratefulness. Attaining the degree has been a team effort. Throughout the entire process, you were there in your own individual and unique ways to invigorate me when I needed it. We have grown even closer as a family and this has been one of the hidden benefits of our degree.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, difficulties have increased within, around, and concerning universities (see Altbach, 1989a, and Wagoner and Kellams, 1992.) These difficulties are due, in part, to these matters: (a) the insular nature of universities, (b) the traditional structure and functioning of universities in modern society, (c) the new climate of accountability within society, and (d) the growing emphasis by governments on financial restraint. In this context, decision making and strategic planning have become increasingly important as universities consider the necessity for program change to serve the expanding and demanding needs of modern society. A Canadian government minister responsible for university matters commented that "internally the universities just don't have a credible system of decision making. They can't adapt to change and they seem incapable of reforming themselves. I foresee for them just two possibilities--either slow strangulation or radical surgery" (cited in Sibley, 1987, p. 121).

In discussing the image of universities in the United States, Marshall and Palca (1992) stated that these institutions are "grappling with credibility problems . . . their public image bruised by misconduct investigations, indirect cost abuses, and soaring tuition fees . . . . [The] trust that held together the partnership among academics, industry, and government agencies since 1945 is being 'eroded' " (p. 1196).

Further, Seymour (1988) stated that universities are facing greater demands for change from external forces, especially government agencies and industry. Duncan ("Government begins . . . .," 1993), in her capacity as Deputy Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development for Alberta, described the rationale for hearings on higher education in the province in this way: the provincial government's "goal is to improve the responsiveness of the system and come up with new and innovative ways

to increase access" (p. 1). Universities have responded in many ways to internal and external pressures and have survived more than 1,000 years. Can they continue to do so for the next 1,000?

Purposes of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to compare the perceptions of selected groups about university responsiveness with respect to the implementation of new programs and major revisions of existing programs. Specifically, the study examined perceptions of vice-presidents (academic) of anglophone universities in Canada, non-university members (corporate executives) of the Corporate-Higher Education Forum (CHEF), and University of Alberta academics and administrators about the way in which universities make decisions, given the current demands for accountability and relevance. The vice-presidents (academic) and CHEF members provided general information, whereas the University of Alberta respondents provided focused, specific information.

The results of the study were used to provide recommendations to assist external agencies which, in consultation with the appropriate academic unit of a university, may be seeking approval and implementation of a new academic program. For example, if a business or a profession wished to have a program established at a university to serve its needs in acquiring qualified personnel, what factors would have to be considered in order to promote successfully the proposed program or major revisions?

Statement of the Problem

General Research Question

How are academic program proposals developed and to what extent are university academic planners perceived to be responsive to internal and external pressures?

Specific Research Questions

In the following questions, "program" refers to "academic program."

1. Development and approval of programs

1.1 How are program proposals initiated?

1.2 How frequently do external agencies suggest program changes and how influential are these agencies?

1.3 How are proposals for program change developed?

1.4 How important are selected criteria and activities in development of program proposals?

1.5 How are internal support and external support obtained for program proposals?

1.6 What are the logistics of approval of program proposals and of the implementation of program change?

1.7 What are the current extent and preferred extent of involvement of Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development in program development?

2. Responsiveness of universities

2.1 What perceptions exist about the extent to which universities are responsive to societal needs as demonstrated by program proposals?

2.2 What are the current extent and preferred extent of involvement of external agencies in advocating program development?

3. Mission statements

3.1 How effective is communication about universities' mission statements?

3.2 What importance is placed by stakeholders upon communication to the external community of the universities' mission statements?

3.3 What linkages are perceived to exist between universities' mission statements and program development?

Significance of the Study for Research and Practice

This study investigated factors affecting the interactions within universities and between universities and their stakeholders regarding academic program development. The findings could assist in defining a "new balance" among the appropriate agencies--a balance between the traditional structure and functioning of universities and the new climate of accountability within modern society.

Knapp (1991) studied strategic planning in eight Alberta colleges and noted an "inside-out" perspective in program development--the most frequent direction of policy and program changes in higher education institutions. The impetus and direction for change most often came initially from the faculty members. Academic planning units of the institution became involved later as they responded to the various internal and external demands. Jonsen (1986, cited in Knapp, 1991, p. 3) listed these different external contexts associated with higher education institutions--demographic, economic, political, organizational, technical, and social--which showed the complexity of institution-society relationships.

This inside-out approach was scrutinized by the Economic Council of Canada (1992), which was concerned with whether society's needs are being met and being met rapidly enough:

> There is a profound sense of unease about whether the Canadian [education] system is meeting the needs of today's students and, hence, of society at large. Society is changing rapidly in this and other countries. Many developed nations . . . have reformed or are reforming their learning systems to reflect such changes. Canadians too need to take a hard look at their own system. (p. 3)

Coherence in Academic Planning

The relevance of Canada's higher education system in meeting the needs of society has been questioned by government bureaucrats and leaders of the businesses and professions, and their communities. In the Economic Council of Canada

document, *A Lot to Learn* (1992), the concept of "coherence" is defined as "the quality of being logically integrated, consistent, and intelligible" (p. 3). It has two dimensions in the context of university academic planning: (a) the transmission by employers of signals about skill needs and about the preparation of graduates of the education system; and (b) the accurate reading of those signals by students, parents, and learning institutions, and most importantly, their response to those signals (p. 3). The authors' principal conclusion is that "at present, the Canadian system lacks coherence and that improvements can be achieved only with a substantially increased involvement--and commitment--of a wide community of stakeholders" (p. 3).

Monique Lefebvre, Vice-Rector, Academic and Research, Université du Québec à Montréal (cited in Bloom, 1991), stressed this need for coherence when she stated that "universities expect business to state clearly its needs and expectations, have a realistic appreciation of their changing roles and mission, be willing to develop partnerships, and help increase government and public awareness of the importance of higher education" (p. 6). Lefebvre also provided examples of what business expects of universities:

> [Business] wants graduates with leadership and communication skills, analytical powers, critical abilities, mastery of languages, adaptability and teamwork ability. It also wants graduates who can respond to immediate corporate needs . . . . [Furthermore] business's views about university research differ. Large businesses believe universities should invest in medium and long-term research; small businesses emphasize short-term research. (p. 6)

Contemporary Views on Canadian Universities

The Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada (AUCC) was concerned about a number of vital questions relating to the academic direction and welfare of Canadian universities. To obtain relevant information, the Board of Directors of AUCC established an independent *Commission of Inquiry on Canadian University Education,* headed by Stuart Smith, with a mandate to "examine the ability

of university education to adapt rapidly to the needs of a Canada that will continue to be increasingly dependent on the essential national resource of well-educated citizens" (Smith, 1991b, p. 7). The Commission's purpose (Smith, 1991a) was to review only the educational function, as opposed to the research function, of Canadian universities and especially undergraduate programs. It also had a mandate to examine ways to ensure that educational programs of high quality are maintained.

The reactions to the report have been mixed, from being well-received as a seminal report for academic change in Canada to being criticized as incomplete and avoiding real issues of underfunding and program erosion (Smith's issues. . . ., September, 1991). The inquiry was extensive, resulting in 63 "actions" or recommendations. Smith's overall finding was that Canadian universities are *fundamentally healthy* and are serving the country well. But Wilson-Smith (1991) expressed the sentiments of many when he stated that "the quest for academic excellence clearly demands more than just a passing grade" (p. 38).

However, the results of a telephone survey of 2,000 people, conducted across Canada in late November and December of 1992 by Angus Reid for the AUCC (*University Affairs*, 1993, April, p. 40), contrasted with the pessimistic view of universities which is held in some quarters. The pollsters interviewed a cross-section of 2,000 representative Canadian adults and concluded that universities in Canada are "doing a good job" (p. 40): The national average for "good or very good" was 83% with a range from 76% to 88%. Reasons for the high rating of universities were given as follows: (a) many respondents thought graduates do well or are satisfied; (b) high standards of education have been established within universities; (c) universities produce an intelligent work force; and (d) some respondents based their positive opinions on their personal university experiences.

Also in contrast to the expressions of dissatisfaction with universities, Small (1991) reported that the respondents to his survey of academic vice-presidents and deans of education, arts, and science in Canadian universities "checked many areas of change indicating that change is a common phenomenon within universities" (p. 2). Further, he stated that as a result of strategic planning, new degree programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels have been introduced such as "MA, MBA, BCom, BN, BA, BSc, BTheology, and BTechnology in Environmental Studies. . . . There was no evidence of the strategic plan resulting in significant reductions of mandates or of program offerings" (p. 5). His quote of one of the respondents demonstrated the focus of university academic planners: " ' Academic units are examining their curricula, programs, courses, new clientele, and new forms of service to the community' " (p. 5).

To better understand the needs and concerns of both universities and businesses, a Canadian agency based in Montréal--the Corporate-Higher Education Forum (CHEF)--was established in 1983. CHEF's membership consists of university leaders (usually the president) and corporate executives of businesses. It meets regularly and is "dedicated to fostering collaboration and understanding between Canada's business and academic communities" (Corporate-Higher Education Forum [CHEF], 1993, Foreword).

Sources of Challenge

Notwithstanding the aforementioned recent views that universities are performing well, they still face challenges pertaining to the academic content of their programs and especially their responsiveness to suggestions for change from external sources. The sources of these challenges are both internal and external. From the internal perspective, the following factors, among others, can lead to problems and conflict in the planning process: the relationships within and among departments

(Scott, 1993; Robinson & Moulton, 1985), between senate and board, and between faculty and senior administration (Benjamin et al., 1993). From the external perspective, requests for more responsive programming have come from government representatives (Alberta Advanced Education, 1989; Andrews, 1992), business (Reich, 1992), students, and the public (Maclean's, 1992).

A focus of this study was to investigate the planning and approval processes to demonstrate the extent to which these processes reflect responsiveness. Eleanor Rourke (1992), Deputy Minister of Education for Saskatchewan, stated that educational administrators must acknowledge the political, economic, and social realities of the period: "The opportunity to influence education policy is possible only when one understands and works within this framework; the cornerstone of strategy is *context*" [italics added] (p. 11).

Internally Generated Challenges to Academic Planning

Decision-making processes. Many of the tensions within the university emerge when information, direction, and the value of both current and new academic programs are considered. Delineation and description of the decision-making processes within the university may assist in understanding how conflict can be generated when decisions are to be made.

Four separate governance models are all evident to some extent in universities: (a) the bureaucratic model (Weber, 1947), (b) the political model (Baldridge, 1971), (c) the organizational anarchy model (Cohen & March, 1972), and (d) the collegial model (Millett, 1962). Chaffee (1983) presented these four models and added a fifth, the rational model. However, she acknowledged that all models have a degree of rationality, "a conscious choice made by a central authority . . . based upon previously recognized values" (p. 2). She defended her broad use of the term "rational" when she stated that "in practice, a decision process is not likely to follow the pattern of any

single model. From one perspective, the process may seem largely collegial, from another, political" (p. 3). Seymour (1988) supported this belief that one perfect model does not exist when he commented that "the [decision] process is herky-jerky, with twists and turns throughout. Consequently, no 'eight steps to success' or a universal 'six-stage model' exists" (p. vii).

Thus, because approval processes are not necessarily uniform, confusion often exists during deliberations on program planning. Mortimer and Bragg (1982) stated that "goal ambiguity is common in academic organizations" (p. 1374). Gross and Grambsh (1974), cited in Mortimer and Bragg (1982, p. 1374), commented that "as long as goals are expressed in relatively abstract terms, there is a consensus about the prevailing values of colleges and universities." However, Richman and Farmer (1974), also cited in Mortimer and Bragg (1982, p. 1374), discussed the consequences of specifying academic goals--they become "highly contested and a source of basic disagreement about fundamental choices within the university." Seymour (1988) described the approval process for new programs as becoming increasingly complex. He also commented on the difficulty which arises even about the same issues when communication is not from the same perspective: "the process can be especially frustrating (and debilitating) if different questions are asked in different ways for different purposes at different levels. . . . The appropriate offices and individuals need a coordinated, comprehensive, and constructive approval process" (p. x).

Although there are several decision-making strategies, one overall tenet is necessary to assure the success of the process. Chaffee (1983) explained that the prior need for any decision-making process affecting an institution's achievement of important goals is a high degree of trust in the process because "tension can be lessened and polarity avoided if all parties involved in the decision understand the process of decision making and feel assured that this process is rational" (p. 2).

Chaffee (1983) further elaborated on the benefits of a trusted decision-making process: "[When] conditions that make rational decisions possible consistently characterize a college or university, that institution experiences not only a high proportion of excellent decisions but also a high degree of confidence in itself, in its values, and in its administration" (p. 2).

Collegiality. Of the five governance models, the *collegial* is the one most often used by faculty members, administrators, and the public to describe the type of day-to-day interactions of academic personnel within a university. It can lead to a cooperative and cohesive faculty unit. Wang (1993) described how collegiality functions when he depicted the university as being more "sheltered" and added that, with collegiality, universities are "fostered by trust, openness, and efficiency. . . . [As a professor, you] can go as far as your mind will lead you, as long as your competence will support, and your productivity will allow you" (p. 2).

Although collegiality is promoted as the main operational practice within universities, it has its modern-day detractors. Robinson and Moulton (1985) showed that camaraderie may not be as common as is assumed by stating that "despite the Ivory Tower myth, academics are not immune from pettiness and immorality" (p. ix). Scott (1993), in an open letter to Canadian university faculty after 23 years of being a university professor, presented a negative and cynical perception of collegiality as being "largely a smoke screen. . . . Internal criticism is held in check . . . . Comfort within and careful PR without is the norm. . . . Arm's length scrutiny is anathema to collegiality, a professional insult" (p. 27).

Robinson and Moulton (1988) further highlighted the potential for strife among the academic staff of universities by describing academic institutions as meritocracies with benefits and power being distributed to people according to merit based upon their performance. Merit is based on a person's contributions and ability to contribute

to the generation and dissemination of knowledge, along with service to the community--professional, university, and community at large. They stated that "the greatest differences in rewards for the faculty--salary, benefits, and power--occur across academic ranks, and people in different ranks are evaluated in different ways" (p. 31), implying that this non-uniform rating system can be perceived as leading to a sense of unfairness within the university.

If a negative view of collegiality shapes the thoughts of many faculty members, then an atmosphere of conflict and suspicion could permeate the operational climate within the walls of academia. For example, Fisher, Ury, and Patton (1991, p. 59) described the "fixed power pie" approach. Briefly stated, the main tenet of this approach is that a limited amount of power exists, and the more power one individual has the less others have. A similar approach is evident in the "fixed resource pie" model common in universities. For example, when certain professors are awarded extra merit increments, fewer increments are available for distribution to other professors. Such concerns about limited resources, especially in this era of financial stringency, can adversely affect the working relationships within universities and thus their collegial nature.

Governance structures. Along with intradepartmental, interdepartmental, and interdisciplinary conflict, another potential source of internal challenge to planning --and thus responsiveness--at a university is its governance structure. (See Figure 2.1). The bicameral system of government entails having two distinct, formally established bodies--one for dealing with academic matters and one having legal and financial authority. In Alberta and Saskatchewan, these two bodies are known as the general faculties council (GFC) and the board of governors respectively. In the other provinces, the former is known as the senate.

In October 1990, the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) sponsored a *Commission on University Governance*. The research body was called the *Independent Study Group on University Governance (ISGUG)*, and its overall term of reference was to "inquire into how universities should govern and administer themselves in the decade of the 1990s and beyond" (CAUT, October 15, 1990). The five areas explored were (a) academic administration, (b) GFCs/senates, (c) boards of governors, (d) professional and accrediting agencies, and (e) federal and provincial legislation.

The authors of the report, Benjamin et al. (1993), stated that the senate [GFC] is intended to be "the chief deliberative and academic decision-making body of the university" (p. 12). They noted, however, that

> the failure of senates to realize their promise as the seat of this activity has emerged as perhaps the most dominant theme. . . . [Moreover] the faculty are there but they feel both impotent and intimated; they sometimes feel used and stifled. . . . From the standpoint of the university administration, there is the perception that the [decision-making] process simply cannot be made responsive to the real demands that are placed on the decision-making structures of the institution. Matters get bogged down in an endless multiplication of committees; individuals use the consultative processes in a manner that sometimes obstructs the ongoing functioning of the university; in general, *there is the perception that the actual effect of the collegial process is to coalesce around the established traditions and resist changes and initiatives that are often desirable and sometimes required in the face of the exigencies of the day* (italics added). (p. 9)

They added that "the lines of communication between these two bodies [boards and GFCs] must be strengthened" (p. 10). Thus, according to this report, the bicameral structure of governance (which may include an ineffectual or disaffected senate) does not always provide for an efficient and responsive decision making process.

Faculty unionism and professionalism. During the last half century, the controversial issues of autonomy and accountability have been dominant in Canadian universities. These issues have striking parallels in other countries (Cameron, 1990). With each province having its own mandate for education, there was a need, as

perceived by academics, to establish the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) in June, 1951 to serve as a national voice on university academic standards and other matters, especially academic freedom and autonomy (Cameron, 1991).

However, according to Watson (1992), the voices of individual faculty unions came together in collective bargaining and became the collective voice of the CAUT, "the most serious challenge to the traditional university process" (p. 122). Between 1975 and 1980 the rapid development of faculty unions came at a time "when it became clear that financial constraints would be a continuing condition and not a short-lived aberration" (p. 122). This formalized approach to negotiations between a university's faculty association and its board of governors has cultivated, for the most part, adversarial relationships between academics on one side and the institution's senior administration and provincial bureaucrats on the other.

Cameron (1991) also discussed CAUT's national committee which was established in 1971 to gather information on the various forms of collective bargaining and how individual faculty and provincial faculty associations could best use the material. He described the committee as containing a roster of "keen aggressive, and committed academic unionists [who] . . . spearheaded a virtual revolution in the management of Canadian universities" (p. 355).

This adversarial approach in faculty and board negotiations may have had a deleterious effect. External agencies (with the provincial government being the most obvious) perceive the professoriate as having both the protection afforded by academic freedom and the added benefits derived from unionization. The concept of academic freedom is used by academics to safeguard their ideological and philosophical beliefs within universities. External agencies consider that academics are protected by collective bargaining under provincial legislation, and thus are often perceived as moving between a professional identify and an unionized role. Thus, external agencies, perhaps sensing

that the independent and overly protected professoriate has lost its sense of the needs of society, have increased their demands that universities be more responsive in meeting these needs.

Wagoner and Kellams (1992) reinforced this perception that contemporary academics have dual protection by summarizing some factors which divide and fragment the professoriate in the United States. They described collective bargaining as one of the "relatively recent developments that tend to undercut advances made in the professionalization process" (p. 1683). Also, Altbach (1989a) stated that "in the last analysis, the morale and performance of the academic profession is as much determined by these mundane details of academic life [such as salary scales] as by the principle of academic freedom" (p. 25). In other words, academics are thought to have the best of two worlds and are protected by whatever doctrine--academic freedom or unionism--fits for the moment. Thus, one possible reading of the bureaucrats could be that if faculty associations are using bureaucratic approaches to improve their economic situation, then they should be expected to find ways to be more responsive to meeting the needs of society.

In summary, although accountability is a predominant theme today, academics have formalized their traditional privilege of autonomy by making it a right--in the form of unionization. Birnbaum (1989) commented on "the processes of collective bargaining that often ritualize disruptive conflict" (p. 38). However, in the opinion of Savage (1993), the rise of unionization "created a much truer collegiality in the sense that faculty met senior administrators at the bargaining table as equals, not as supplicants" (p. 4).

Externally Generated Challenges to Academic Planning

Conflict and strife generated within a university are not the main concern of the public, which is more interested in actual programs and outcomes of university education. Demands from the external environment have been frequent and loud and

have *accountability* as the focus. According to Benjamin et al. (1993), the public "has a right to know what the universities are doing, why they are doing it, and whether they do it well" (p. 54). Janigan and Brady (1992) further supported this demand from the public by stating that across Canada, "tough-minded students and parents are demanding that the universities account for their use of the taxpayers' resources . . . [and] the underlying assumption is that the universities can no longer remain aloof from society's scrutiny" (p. 35). The following discussion outlines how the autonomy of the professoriate--especially relating to the development of academic direction--protects, in the minds of the faculty, the right to seek the truth within universities.

Accountability and autonomy. There appears to be little research on how an external agency (e.g., a professional association, business, or interest group) can initiate or influence program changes within a university--an "outside-in" approach. Berghofer and Vladicka (1980) and Benjamin, McGovern, and Bourgeault (1993) emphasized that the main deterrent to program initiatives originating from sources external to the university has been the fear of losing academic autonomy to outside spheres of influence (e.g., to government). As a result, the degree of responsiveness appears, to the external constituents, to be less than it might be.

Autonomy and accountability have often been cited (e.g., Altbach, 1989a & 1989b; Mortimer and Bragg, 1982) as being in opposition, affecting academics and external agencies differently. As Altbach (1989a) commented, "there is an inevitable tension between autonomy and accountability [to external agencies]" (p. 19). Autonomy is a necessity for academics in order to be responsive--at least from their perspective--to the overall needs of society and the goals of academia. Calls for accountability regarding academic content, therefore, may generally be seen as a threat. External agencies, however, may see autonomy as a braking influence on

responsiveness and may see measures of accountability as necessary tools in planning and in their wish to meet the particular needs of today's society.

Dialogue is often obfuscated by the elusive meaning of "accountability." As reported by Benjamin et al. (1993), "accountability is very much on the agenda of higher education and governments these days . . . [and] is a many-faceted matter" (p. 53). Hines (1988, p. 37) explained accountability using five categories occurring in different policy domains: (a) *systemic accountability* relating to the fundamental purposes of higher education; (b) *substantive accountability* pertaining to values and norms; (c) *programmatic accountability* dealing with academic and other programs; (d) *procedural accountability* dealing with administrative and institutional procedures, and (e) *fiduciary accountability* applying to finance.

Thus, when governments talk about accountability, they may be thinking of any or all of these categories although they probably would be considering mainly the fiduciary type, while a faculty unit may be contemplating primarily the programmatic accountability aspect. Therefore, although a government may feel that the university is not being accountable, the faculty unit may consider that it is. This confusion could lead to lack of understanding and acceptance of one agency by the other; conflict, harmful to their relationship, may arise as a result.

Moreover, the call for accountability from external constituents is matched by the concern of academics for loss of *autonomy* which is considered by Brubacher (1977) to be one of the longest traditions of higher education. Autonomy exists on two levels. The first level is the individual autonomy which each professor has during day-to-day academic functions. Closely connected to this individual autonomy is academic freedom, the principle that academics can teach and research whatever they deem appropriate on any particular topic without fear of dismissal or retribution. The second form is the collective institutional autonomy which sets universities apart from

other agencies such as governments and industry in that they have the ability to set policy and function without external interference (Altbach, 1989b). Altbach (1989a) added that the norm of university autonomy is the institution's "ability to set not only its own goals but also to determine the curriculum, requirements for awarding degrees and ethos and orientation of the university" (p. 3). However, as discussed later in this document, this right for both the individual professor and university to control the destiny of the academic content offered at higher education institutions has not been automatic but has been an arduous struggle throughout the evolution of universities.

The autonomy and accountability debate has been created in part by the different philosophical paradigms and the various classifications of authority. In Canada, the classifications of authority in the operation of universities involve a three-way distribution--the *authority of knowledge* of the academic staff (Wagoner and Kellams, 1992), the *executive authority* of the university administration, and the *fiscal authority* of government bureaucrats. Also, from the perspective of Birnbaum (1988), there are four operational models or frameworks by which universities operate : (a) the collegial institution, (b) the bureaucratic institution, (c) the political institution, and (d) the anarchical institution. Birnbaum provided these characteristics of his four models.

1. *Collegiality*. Bowen and Schuster (1986, cited in Birnbaum, 1988, p. 87) identified three major components: (a) "the right to participate in institutional affairs"; (b) "membership in a 'congenial and sympathetic company of scholars in which friendships, good conversation, and mutual aid can flourish' "; and (c) "the equal worth of knowledge in various fields that precludes preferential treatment of faculty in different disciplines."

2. *Bureaucracy*. Blau (1956, cited in Birnbaum, 1988, p. 107) stated that bureaucracy refers to " ' the type of organization designed to accomplish large-scale

administrative tasks by systematically coordinating the work of many individuals'." Birnbaum (p. 107) added that bureaucratic structures are established to perform three tasks: (a) "relate organizational programs to the achievement of specified goals," (b) standardize behavior to predict better the processes and activities of the organizations; and (c) allow organizations to thus "become more effective and efficient."

3. *Political.* Cyert and March (1963, cited in Birnbaum, 1988, p. 132) described a university as "a supercoalition of subcoalitions with diverse interests, preferences, and goals." Bacharach and Lawler (1980, cited in Birnbaum, 1988, p. 132) added that each of the "subcoalitions is composed of interest groups that see at least some commonalty in their goals and work together to attempt to achieve them."

4. *Anarchical.* Cohen and March (1974, cited in Birnbaum, 1988, p. 154) stated that an organized anarchy displays three characteristics: "problematic goals," "unclear technology," and "fluid participation." Cohen and March noted that when the goals are not clear, and there is uncertainty how the technology works, the decision-making processes become unclear. Thus, each of the three types of authority can be integrated with each of the four models. This integration has created a degree of misunderstanding and helped to sustain the tension between autonomy and accountability that has existed for many years.

To illustrate the effects of the integration of the forms of authority with the various operational models, one of the responsibilities that the academic community has controlled over the centuries is the selection, evaluation, and promotion of incumbents to the profession (Altbach, 1989a). Peer review committees, an example of the collegial model, exist on university campuses to consider the professors' applications for renewal, promotion, and tenure; "the hallmark of the appointment and promotion process is meritocracy" (Altbach, 1989a, p. 20). Meritocracy is based upon

the degree of achievement that an individual professor has accomplished in teaching, research, and service. The decisions by these review committees are based purely on academic merit; questions as to whether the institution can afford the promotion of an individual are not to be considered. However, individuals external to the review committee--senior administration or boards of governors of the university as well as provincial higher education departments--have to look at the entire financial picture for the university. When provincial politicians reduce overall funding to the universities--and in their eyes are accountable to the citizens--the senior administrators of the institutions are caught in the middle between the government's financial constraints and the faculty's desire for autonomy.

Even with economic resources declining, some academics are of the opinion that soliciting external sources of revenue compromises their autonomy. However, Douglas Wright, former president of the University of Waterloo, stated in an interview in the *Bulletin* of the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education (1990, p. 1) that "universities would enhance their independence, rather than endanger losing it, by accepting more contributions from business and corporations. [He said] 'independence comes out of pluralism. You lose independence if you have only one paymaster'."

Hartmark and Hines (1986) further concluded that the predominant perception held by faculty members in higher education institutions is that the issue of accountability is generally posed in zero-sum terms as the "increases in external demands for information and additional measures of coordination and control result in a direct loss of institutional autonomy" (p. 12). Further, the faculty has to make the most adjustment if the present organizational structure changes. Griffiths (1988) commented on this when he described the structure of most universities which have

> virtually all the vital processes under faculty control--the curriculum, faculty selection, promotion, appointment to tenure, and often salaries of professors; and academic governance. The major goal of faculty governance, it would seem, is to render administration impotent--and generally that goal is successfully met. University faculties have successfully made it impossible (or nearly so) for deans and presidents to lead or to administer, and the better the university, the less it is led. (p. 37)

Birnbaum (1989), in his paper on the difficulty of being a university president, stated that within institutions themselves "constraints on leadership arise due to greater involvement by faculties in academic and personnel decisions; faculty collective bargaining; greater goal ambiguity; [and] greater fractionation of the campus into interest groups, leading to a loss of consensus and of community. . . ." (p. 37).

Few deny that the universities must be accountable to governments as well as to voters for the large amount of public funds that are spent on the universities. According to Benjamin et al. (1993), "the problem is to marry this need for accountability to the equally important need for university autonomy and for academic freedom" (p. 60).

Relevance. A term closely associated with the accountability and autonomy debate is "relevance." In this study on university responsiveness, "relevance" referred to the academic content of the programs presently being offered at a university, while "responsiveness" referred to the consideration and approval of major revisions to academic content or new program proposals designed to meet society's needs.

According to Martha Piper, Vice-President (Research) at the University of Alberta, program offerings that are pertinent to meeting the needs of society are becoming more important to the public and governments day-by-day: "universities must realize that the pendulum is swinging towards the need for more relevancy" (personal communication, 26 November 1992).

This sentiment was supported by Lynne Duncan (personal communication, 23 September 1992), Alberta Deputy Minister of Advanced Education, when she

discussed the increasing demands on her department from business and industry that more responsiveness be demonstrated by Alberta's universities and colleges. She earlier identified the need to produce graduates with more suitable, applicable skills to immediately meet the demands which will face them upon hiring: "there is an increasing need to ensure value-for-money and accountability for public funds" (Alberta Advanced Education, October 1989, p. 22).

However, relevance cannot be defined with a sweeping generalization. To begin to define "relevance" the first question is "relevant to what or to whom?" Similar to the delineation of accountability, there are different categories for relevance. In no prioritized order these various forms of relevance are as follows: (a) *institutional*--the degree to which an academic program follows the mission of the university; (b) *discipline*--how a new program initiative relates to a discipline; (c) *political*--the degree to which government, often in response to the perceived views of the tax-paying public, considers appropriate (e.g. necessary, or "money-well-spent") the content of an academic program; (d) *professional*-- the needs of the various professions are met by having professional schools housed on university campuses; (e) *industrial*--the need of business and industry to hire sufficient university graduates trained in certain skills and immediately able to apply these skills upon employment; and (f) *personal*--many students attend universities for their own personal development, taking courses pertinent to the path they have set.

These six categories demonstrate the difficulty of describing relevance in a single contextual frame. Yet, the general terms of accountability, relevance, and responsiveness are used by all stakeholders in higher education to describe concerns and frustrations within the system. Considering the potential permutations and combinations of the five types of accountability (Hartmark and Hines, 1986) with the six forms of

relevance, the chances of confusion, misinterpretation, misunderstanding, and frustration among the stakeholders increase.

Academic freedom and tenure. As reported by Cameron (1990), academic freedom and tenure were privileges and then rights eventually won by the faculty members of all Canadian universities. However, they are presently seen by various stakeholders as factors which reduce the degree of responsiveness of academics who have authority to decide the academic content of programs, while having the protection (tenure) to maintain this authority.

Warrack (1990, p. 6) stated that tenure and academic freedom have now become the "sacred cows" of academia. But the public often perceives these two academic entities as serving as shelters from the hard economic realities of the day, providing job security without the need to display accountability. Academic freedom and tenure, according to Robinson and Moulton (1985), do nothing but perpetuate the Ivory Tower myth whereby

> institutions are sheltered from the struggles and conflicts of the 'real world' . . . [and in fact this myth] is widely accepted even by people who ought to know better--those of us in the academic setting. . . . The myth tells us that we are a privileged lot, protected as others are not. (p. 1)

Comparison with community colleges. Associated with relevance of university program offerings is the comparison between universities and community colleges. A tendency exists today to consider that colleges provide more flexibility, adaptability, and cooperation in the programmatic-change process than do universities. The perception is that colleges are responding better to the needs of business, industry, and society at large. The merits of universities compared with other forms of higher education are debated at length in the governmental and business boardrooms of the nation (personal communications during doctoral seminars--Lynne Duncan,

23 September 1992; Gerry Kelly, 27 January 1993, President, Grant MacEwan College; and Jim Horsman, 15 March 1993, former Alberta Minister of Advanced Education).

Andrews (1992) summarized the issues in the debate about the provision of general education or training in specific skills:

> Notwithstanding fiscal problems, colleges and universities must examine the relevance of their programs in preparing the labor force for the future. With the rapidity of change and technological processes that have evolved, should the curriculum focus on content and specific skills or provide a broad-based knowledge with a focus on flexibility and adaptability? Are we training or educating, and is it for economic or educational reasons? (p. 18)

Is it possible to combine academic excellence with relevance? In describing a "program that works," Dwyer (1992) quoted Douglas Wright, former president of Waterloo University, who discussed the innovations in program delivery (i.e., cooperative education) at his institution:

> At first we were considered an absolute heresy. Relevance and academic excellence were seen as completely incompatible--you could do one but not the other. But both? That was blasphemy . . . . We dared to do both, and that is the secret of our success . . . . As well, [Waterloo's] students have captured the attention of business leaders looking to recruit graduates with a difference. (p. 26)

New business culture. Reich (1992) outlined his views on the direction of global economic policy making for the 1990s. He discussed how business practices today are changing from high-volume hierarchical to high-value decentralization whereby in the latter "profits derive not from scale and volume but from continuous discovery of new linkages between solutions and needs" (p. 85). That is, speed and agility are increasingly becoming more integral to this new style of enterprise. Reich stated that business must be able "to switch direction quickly, pursue options when they arise, discover new linkages between problems and solutions, wherever they may lie" (p. 89).

Unlike the businesses at the forefront of these changes, universities continue to conduct their day-to-day business in much the same structured, hierarchical way as in the

past. According to Clark (1983), the complex nature of universities will not be well understood if they are compared to other organizations similar to ones with which the public is acquainted--business firms and public bureaus. Ziegler (1993) further stressed the existence of this lack of understanding:

> Superimpose a corporate culture over an academic culture and the result is chaos. The two are poles apart and, in this case, opposites do not attract. Within the corporate culture, the absolutes are accountability for actions and the prime importance being able to test the concept of receiving value for money. Within the academic culture, the absolutes are the pursuit of truth at any cost, strict adherence to the scientific method and respect for academic freedom. (p. D1)

Because university planning tends to be collegial at all levels, the program approval process, as stated by Chaffee (1990), is hierarchical and laboriously slow. This slow pace of program approval might raise a number of questions in the minds of the business communities and society at large. Is the change of style in the business world clashing more and more with the traditional operation of universities? Are these higher education institutions changing with the times to accommodate the newer faster pace that society has adopted as reflected by the business practices? In summary, are the improvements at the universities occurring fast enough from society's perspective? Also, are the programs in universities relevant to society's current demands? Is there a better way--more efficient, faster, more flexible--for the universities to operate?

In their paper on entrepreneurial activities in higher education, Michael and Holdaway (1992) summarized the need for higher education institutions to be "more responsive (i.e., more entrepreneurial, more market-oriented) to a variety of societal needs, while still maintaining academic standards, values, and relevant traditions" (p. 36).

Thus, there are varying perceptions of the extent to which universities are responsive to the needs of individuals and groups in society. This study investigated the sense of responsiveness within universities, specifically at the University of

Alberta, and some of their stakeholders, especially the non-university members of the CHEF. Further, it identified the perceptual differences and the degree of variability among all the groups.

Terminology

In general terms, "responsiveness" can have two meanings. The first meaning is related to how quickly there is a reaction to a stimulus. To illustrate, in the language of perceptual-motor development, how *rapidly* individuals react to a stimulus, such as a light turning on in random fashion, is a measure of their responsiveness. The second meaning is related to whether or not there has been *any* reaction to the stimulus. In the context of this study, responsiveness was used in the latter definition--the degree to which university academics meet the needs of stakeholders throughout the planning process--and not to the first definition which could be replaced with the term "reactiveness."

Unless the context dictates otherwise, the term "University"--with upper case U-- refers specifically to the University of Alberta; the term "university"--with lower case u-- refers in a general sense to any institution of higher education.

"Relevance" refers to the applicability of academic content of courses currently being offered by universities with respect to meeting the needs of its stakeholders.

The term "higher education" refers to the process carried on in universities unless otherwise specified.

"Internal" refers only to the planning and approval processes within a university.

The term "external" modifies any agency or stakeholder *outside* the university context as a whole as compared to external to the units *within* a university such as a department or faculty.

An "academic program" at a university is defined as a structured sequence of credit courses and educational experiences, successful completion of which leads to a degree or certificate. (Academic programs are usually referred to as "programs" in this thesis.)

A "major program revision" refers to changes resulting in new content or instructional approach for the program. Examples of these changes could be the addition of more (i.e., greater than two) courses with innovative course content, a new method of content delivery, and/or providing graduates with unique skills and knowledge upon graduation. "Academic program proposal" refers to both a "new program" and a "major program revision." The term "academic criteria" refers to the criteria used to consider the value of the proposed academic content of a new program or major revisions to existing programs.

The term "educational or academic planners" refers to the faculty members on the "academic development committee" which prioritizes and approves academic changes within universities, as opposed to professional planners.

"Public at large" is used to refer to people in general who are not speaking on behalf of nay particular interest group.

"Survey," as described by Walker and Burnhill (1988) and used in this study, refers to the cross-sectional approach where the "measurements are obtained at or about a particular time, and for the most part the purpose is to describe situations and estimate frequencies rather than to establish causal patterns" (p. 101).

Delimitations

This study had these delimitations:

1. Only the vice-presidents (academic), as representatives of the anglophone universities in Canada, and the corporate board members of the Corporate-Higher

Education Forum were surveyed by questionnaire. Representatives of the professions were not surveyed.

2. Only individuals familiar with the planning process at the University of Alberta were interviewed.

3. The study emphasized only the academic-programming principles and practices of universities. More specifically, the question of *choice of academic content* offered at universities was examined in detail, realizing that programming entails other necessary issues such as staff complements, library holdings, equipment, and facilities to support the program delivery.

4. The major emphasis was placed exclusively on proposals for new programs or major revisions to existing programs as opposed to new course offerings. Major program changes resulting from departmental restructuring demands originating from sources external to the department were not included in the study.

5. Undergraduate and graduate degree programs only were studied and not non-credit courses.

6. Only program proposals which had been reviewed by the General Faculties Council of the University of Alberta and recorded in the minutes of its meetings from the years 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, and 1993 were considered when selecting the interviewees for the study.

Limitations

The study had these limitations:

1. The availability of the respondents to be interviewed and interact with the interviewer for a substantial period of time was limited by their willingness and individual schedules and commitments.

2. The reliance of a portion of this study upon questionnaire instruments may have limited the kinds of perceptions of the two survey populations that could be expressed and the number of variables that could be studied.

3. The interviews were conducted within a context of significant financial distress as announced by the Alberta government of the day; specifically, the proposed downsizing of the provincial grant to the higher education system in Alberta may have had an effect on the individuals.

Assumptions

The proposed study was undertaken on the basis of the following assumptions:

1. The information from all respondents was accurate.

2. The methodological procedures were appropriate to meet the purposes of the study.

3. Academic planning is one of the major, on-going functions of universities.

4. The senior academic officials of universities were in a position to reflect upon the elements which characterize the academic planning process.

5. The non-university board members of the *Corporate-Higher Education Forum* were in a position to reflect upon the elements which characterize the university academic planning process.

6. Individuals were willing to share their views and knowledge regarding planning, given assurances of confidentiality and anonymity.

Outline of Thesis

A review of the literature on university responsiveness is presented in Chapter 2. A discussion follows in Chapter 3 on the methods used to collect and verify the data. Beginning with Chapter 4, a discussion of how new programs are planned and approved is presented. The information in Chapter 4, along with Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, is presented in the following manner to identify which of the three sources

of the data is being applied at that juncture. First the information is presented from a general perspective under the heading *Vice-presidents (academic)*, followed by the discussion under the heading *Corporate-Higher Education Forum*. Information of a more specific nature is then presented under the heading *University of Alberta*. However, data for a specific topic may not have been gathered from all sources. Chapter 5 presents the opinions of academics and corporate leaders as to how responsive universities are in academic planning. Chapter 6 provides information on the understanding and promoting of a university's mission and how the mission relates to responsiveness. Chapter 7 consists of a discussion, synthesis, conclusions, and recommendations based on information obtained in the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The reputation of a university is heavily dependent on assessment of the quality of its academic programs. Throughout the evolution of universities, transformations in academic priorities and programming have occurred as the needs of society have changed. However, the fact that these shifts have happened and the degree to which they have had an impact on university governance and academic programs are not equally appreciated by the various stakeholders in higher education. Further, Berghofer and Vladicka (1980) stated that during occasions where academic change may be warranted, administrators and academics experience unease as manifested in tension between centralized authority, institutional and individual autonomy, and community interest (p. 59). This tension has resulted in reticence of universities to involve outside influences in their decisions on academic programming. Why has this entrenched philosophy of non-interference, as highlighted by conventions such as academic freedom and autonomy, become a hallmark of modern universities?

Fincher (1986), Axelrod (1990), Cameron (1990), Rhoades (1992), and Shields (1992) affirmed that an awareness of the history and theory which have shaped educational institutions assists in understanding the context of institutional development and change. Thus, in order to promote this understanding of the foundations of thought within higher educational institutions, the historical review which follows aims to provide a context for the rationales of both university academic decision-makers and the individuals and groups who are dissatisfied with these institutions' planning processes. First, one has to understand the evolutionary changes which affect the professoriate, also referred to as the faculty, academics or "whatever generic noun may be used to define and describe all those who lay claim to membership in what is sometimes romantically referred to as 'the ancient and

honorable community of scholars' " (Wagoner and Kellams, 1992, p. 1674). By understanding the evolution of the professoriate, one can better appreciate the collective psyche and rationales within academe (Altbach, 1989a) and reasons why universities are (or are not) responsive. Moore (1991) expressed the contemporary thinking on higher education when he stated that

> it is abundantly clear that governments, university administrations, faculty, student, labour, research, business, and other associations' representatives of both public and private sector interests have become highly aware of the importance of [university] governance issues and their socio-economic, political, cultural, and policy implications for the Canadian public. (p. 7)

Evolution of the Professoriate

According to Altbach (1989a) and Wagoner and Kellams (1992), the academic professoriate is the heart and soul of any university. The professors possess the academic autonomy and position to chart the intellectual course for the institution. But it has not always been that way. Over the centuries, there have been swings in the degree of autonomy that each of the constituents--faculty, students, the university administration, along with the Church and other external agencies--have possessed. Also, there has been a pendular swing in the academic foci of universities, from a liberal arts focus to more of a career or occupational orientation, and then back again. Each "swing" has resulted from major changes in the perceptions of priorities for society during any particular period in history (Brubacher, 1977; Le Goff, 1980; Axelrod, 1990; Wagoner and Kellams, 1992; and Watson, 1992).

The earliest universities were established before the thirteenth century (Wagoner and Kellams, 1992). During those times, intellectuals migrated to various cities in Europe depending on what each wished to study--medicine, liberal arts, or legal debate, as examples (Altbach, 1989a; Wagoner and Kellams, 1992). Of note, as reported by Wagoner and Kellams (1992), was that during this period "universities were portable institutions, tied down by neither property nor territorial loyalties,

[which] gave the academic community a powerful weapon in the form of *cessatio*" (p. 1675) whereby the students, and thus the universities, could relocate if they were overly oppressed by secular or other authorities. Thus, during the evolution of the medieval university, especially in Italy and France, "the power initially rested with the student guilds" (p. 1675) which set the prices for room and board, books, and other necessities. Professors could not leave town without the student leaders' permission, and could be fined for not being punctual or sufficiently prepared for a lecture: "From the students' perspective at least, the message was clear: the university--that is to say the professoriate--existed to serve them" (p. 1676).

With the advent of "endowed chairs" and other sources of funding apart from the students, the professoriate gained more autonomy (Le Goff, 1980; Wagoner and Kellams, 1992). However, as time progressed, civic officials handled more of the funding for universities. The concept of a body of external agents or governors evolved and, as stated by Wagoner and Kellams (1992), "by the sixteenth or seventeenth century, both student power and professional autonomy had been severely undermined by the rise to prominence of these nascent boards of trustees" (p. 1676). Moreover, as related by Le Goff (1980), the public authorities themselves appeared in a wide variety of forms--church, civic, and even imperial power--and among these public powers "there might exist either a hierarchy, frequently difficult to define or respect, or else fairly clear conflicts of interest or policy" (p. 137).

Having lost authority in the practical sense to the external boards and agencies, the professoriate and students wielded authority of a different kind. As stated by Wagoner and Kellams (1992), the students and their professors

> embraced and enhanced the authority of knowledge that through the centuries has been used to both support and to challenge the legitimacy, power, and conventional wisdom of popes, kings and of church and state. As it matured, the university--and especially the professoriate, its heart and soul--pumped life and spirit into Bacon's dictum 'Knowledge is power.' (p. 1676)

Another but more specialized approach to a study of the historical development of universities is from a curriculum content perspective. Throughout these periods of university evolution the pendulum has swung back and forth repetitively from a liberal arts orientation to a career-occupational orientation (Axelrod, 1990). Universities in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries "underwent transformation from institutions geared to professional preparation into institutions which served as instruments of social reproduction and control" (Wagoner and Kellams, 1992, p. 1677). Later in the beginning of the nineteenth century, the pendulum swung back as "new universities reflected the impact of the Industrial Revolution and the pressure for increased and more utilitarian educational opportunity" (p. 1677). These swings represented what was considered to be currently important throughout various periods in history from an academic viewpoint.

The role of the professoriate continued to change during these times. In Scotland, scholars made important contributions to the enlightened thought of the day and in a sense anticipated the modern university by emphasizing research as well as teaching (Wagoner and Kellams, 1992). Further, at these universities, the professors went from being "regent masters" who taught across the curriculum to professors who specialized in a single discipline (Altbach, 1989a; Wagoner and Kellams, 1992).

In Germany during the Middle Ages an important redefinition and changing identity of the professoriate occurred. According to Wagoner and Kellams (1992), the German scholars, "in their dedication to the discovery of new knowledge, extolled the virtues of *Lehrfreiheit*--the freedom to teach--and *Lernfreiheit*--the freedom to learn--principles that soon came to define the concept of academic freedom" (p. 1677). These tenets of academic freedom enabled the scholars to extend the boundaries of contemporary knowledge (Le Goff, 1980; Wagoner and Kellams, 1992). Moreover, these boundaries were not just knowledge-based. As stated by Altbach (1989a), the

contemporary role and scope of the academic profession have "expanded significantly. Academics are no longer confined to an Ivory Tower. They are based in universities but play a much wider role in society. This situation makes the definition of the academic role difficult" (p. 2).

Wagoner and Kellams (1992) continued their chronicle of the evolution of the university professoriate, and thus universities, by describing the increasing numbers of professors and students, especially in the United States. The increase was essentially due to several factors: greater specification of professors' expertise--the "specialized expert" (p. 1681); increased access by the overall population--not just white male Protestants; and improved funding for higher education--for example, the GI Bill after the Second World War, the largest federal scholarship program in history which "imbedded the idea in the national psyche that the United States system of higher education should be of, by, and for the people" (Wagoner and Kellams, 1992, p. 1682).

However, Wagoner and Kellams (1992), in describing the growth within universities in the United States at the beginning of the 19th century, stated that the gradual move by some faculty members toward greater diversification and specialization had more significance than did the numerical growth of universities. More and more the professors began to identify themselves with specific disciplines or fields of inquiry at the very time that the curriculum began to broaden. Wagoner and Kellams added that "breadth may have overwhelmed depth as the range of courses offered in each school was rather extensive" (p. 1679).

Further, in describing the growth of the professoriate and universities in general, Wagoner and Kellams (1992) stated that "the pace of change has indeed quickened and the range in status and role differentiation has been stretched beyond what some maintain are reasonable limits" (p. 1674). They also added that "of great

significance, too, is the influence, over time, of an ever-expanding and increasingly diverse array of clients served by the demands placed upon higher education" (p. 1674). Associated with programmatic responsiveness is institutional responsiveness whereby universities expand physically, both on-site and at different sites, in response to need and demand. In relation to this growth of universities, Altbach (1989b) added that "many post World War Two developments in higher education did not stem from purposeful reform or planned change but from accretion--the adding of functions, institutes, and curricula without a clearly articulated plan--or simply from expansion" (p. 54).

The evolution of a university in such a manner can lead to unique perceptions of these institutions. In their paper on the paradigmatic evolution of higher education in the United States, Simsek and Heydinger (1993) provided several metaphors which they considered best explained the paradigm--the basic assumptions or rules that are taken for granted about how an organization functions--of higher education in its current context: "amoeba, octopus, elephant, and wildly growing garden" (p. 19). They used the metaphors to describe the university:

> An amoeba is a one-cell organism which is essentially shapeless and multiplies by division. . . . [It] symbolizes the lack of strong/solid identity for the university . . . and tries to be 'all things to all people' and is in a constant process of multiplication or very much like a 'wildly growing garden'. . . [with] uncontrolled and continuous expansion of programs. The elephant metaphor conjures up size and a massive body. The octopus, however, is easily identified with its multi-armed body . . . [having] its eight arms embracing different constituencies simultaneously, or a single body attempting to satisfy the demands of many constituents simultaneously. (pp. 19-20)

In parallel with the changes in the academic role of the professoriate were the changes in the administrative structure of these institutions. Wagoner and Kellams (1992) noted that after having begun as relatively powerless, the professoriate's authority increased with the trend towards specialization. These authors described how formal faculty associations were established worldwide, and were signals that

there "could be unity in diversity" (p. 1682). Academic freedom, due process, and shared authority were among the concepts that redefined the relationships among the faculty, administration, and boards of governors as the professionalization movement reached a pinnacle during the peak of the academic revolution after the Second World War.

Wagoner and Kellams (1992), in concluding their article on the professoriate, highlighted that which keeps the diverse groups of professions within the profession of academic scholars together--the attainment of the PhD or similar degree by the new scholars. They commented that

> a process of socialization occurs that binds academics even as they become more fragmented and specialized. . . . [They] absorb common academic values as they undergo similar rites of passage. They internalize a respect for rational discourse, learn to apply and appreciate accepted canons of scholarship and rules of scientific investigation, and develop a commitment to the ideal of academic freedom and professional autonomy. (p. 1684)

The last statement in their paper reinforced the historical and common connections to a shared past: "Above all, perhaps, is the recognition that now, as in medieval Europe, the professoriate exists to discover and share knowledge. For all of the variations in form and function, substance and style, the quest remains the same" (p. 1684).

Michael and Holdaway (1992) employed a more generalized approach in their study of the development of higher education in western countries. They stated that "four major overlapping phases can be identified and given the following arbitrary names--'elitism', 'reconstructionism', 'reductionism', and 'entrepreneurialism' " (p. 18). The first phase, which began around the 11th century, occurred when education was for the privileged few (p. 18). The second phase, essentially after the Second World War, occurred when "universal access to education was introduced as a result of perceived benefits to society. . . . [The era] was characterized by hope and expectations; it was a period when education received generous government support"

(p. 18). When resources and governments' financial support declined, the third phase, which they labeled "reductionism," occurred accompanied by "measures to increase accountability, zero-based budgeting, system rationalization, and various measures to enhance efficiency" (p. 19). The fourth stage, "entrepreneurialism," began around the late 1970s and "incorporates many activities resulting from funding difficulties, government intervention, and the recognition that universities can undertake revenue-generating initiatives to a much greater extent than they have previously" (p. 19).

The result of the evolution of the professoriate--the university of today (in the United States)--has been described by Simsek and Heydinger (1993) in the following terms:

1. Growing, expanding, diverse programs with much variety;
2. Giving priority to the teaching mission of the university;
3. Large size resulting from low admissions standards and an emphasis on quantity;
4. Decentralized, autonomous, collegial decision making granted to units to develop their own programs; as well as
5. Emphasizing the service mission of the university. (p. 20)

Evolution of Canadian Universities

Canada's development in higher education was similar to the evolution in the United States, Britain, and Europe. The earliest institutions were founded by religious groups. During the middle decades of the 20th century, universities expanded as more students enrolled and the economies strengthened (Watson, 1992). One factor which differentiates the Canadian educational system at all levels from other western industrialized countries is that, with a few exceptions (e.g., for some aboriginal and military students), the funding and overall administration are the constitutional responsibilities of the ten provincial and two territorial governments. The federal government underwrites their provincial counterparts through a transfer of funds program called the Established Programs Financing (EPF), since changed to Canada Heritage and Social Service Transfer in the February 1995 federal budget of the

Government of Canada. The resultant outcome of this is that the provinces are "assiduous in protecting their ultimate jurisdiction over education" (Watson, 1992, p. 116).

According to Axelrod (1990), universities have developed in a context which has been both value-laden and unique to each institution. Cameron (1990) concluded that the history of Canadian universities suggests that three values have become pivotal to their organization: institutional independence (corporate autonomy), state support, and academic self-government.

Most of the early universities served the different church denominations (Brubacher, 1990; Cameron, 1990; Watson, 1992). As noted by Axelrod (1990) and Cameron (1990), Canadian universities began to be incorporated by provincial legislation in the mid-nineteenth century, and by the latter part of that century the idea of institutional or corporate autonomy began to take hold. Cameron (1990) added that the advent of scientific research led to the diminution of the church's influence in charting the intellectual path for society and contributed directly to a substantial advantage in an increasingly industrialized economy. This capacity for a new focus of research invited an entirely new interest from government and business and less from the established church. Thus, the second of the three values that characterizes university organization--state support--was confirmed.

Cameron (1990) also observed that state support for universities, in modest and unreliable amounts since Confederation, often resulted in bitter controversy. The major impediment to public funding was the denominational character of most of these institutions, and it was not until the establishment of provincial non-sectarian universities in western Canada--Saskatchewan, 1907, Alberta, 1908, and British Columbia in 1915--that state support emerged as a viable alternative to funding (Watson, 1992, p. 110). Cameron (1990) acknowledged that with the universities'

boards, and sometimes even their presidents, being appointed by government, and with their funding derived from modest tuition fees and government grants, these were state universities in every respect.

Although state support and institutional autonomy appeared to be pulling in opposite directions, Cameron (1990) stated that the emergence of academic self-government delayed the conflict (p. 3). He also pointed out that Dalhousie University was the first university in Canada to adopt academic self-government (1863) which gave it substantially more independence from government, by establishing an academic senate, composed of senior faculty. The senate was given general authority over the internal academic affairs of the university.

Cameron (1990) further chronicled the historical development of Canadian universities continuing with the 1906 Flavelle Commission which suggested an effective balance among the three values of institutional autonomy, state support, and self-government contending for recognition. This balance was achieved by this bicameral concept of university governance with the authority of the Crown vested in the board of governors to control and manage the university along with the establishment of the senate to direct its academic interests (p. 4). Cameron (1990) next described the initial germination of academic freedom initially at the University of Toronto in the late 1920s and early 1930s, followed by the distinct tendency of universities to become increasingly dependent on the combination of government grants and tuition fees. However, as universities were developing a greater dependence on governments, there were signs that institutional autonomy might not be entirely secure.

Institutional autonomy was perceived to be weakened by the dependence of the universities upon government grants which were enlarging--the separation between the concepts of state support and independence for the university appeared to be growing.

Cameron (1990) emphasized that academic self-government was enhanced especially during the post-war period when phenomenal growth occurred.

As recounted by Cameron (1990), the 1966 Duff-Berdahl report, commissioned by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), initiated a genuine transformation of university government and management. Cameron (1990) noted that faculty members assumed greater control of the senates and other academic bodies. Savage (1993) documented this change of authority by stating that "because they [the faculty] were responsible for the main functions of teaching and research, they were the core of the university" (p. 4). Savage further stated that the founders of CAUT hoped that faculty elected to the senate would dominate the university and establish a self-governing guild along the lines of the medical or legal profession.

However, as noted by Cameron (1990), the Duff-Berdahl report conflicted with the spirit of the Flavelle findings which had placed managerial authority in the president's office. The Duff-Berdahl report advocated management by committee, preferably at the departmental level. Then, to complete the process of institutional self-government, the principles of academic freedom and security were enshrined in the institution of tenure. Quite suddenly, as Cameron (1990) observed, the management of universities was stripped of its authority to control the employment of faculty and hence to determine the intellectual course of the university.

Cameron (1990) completed his paper with a discussion of the need to strengthen the board of governors to enhance institutional autonomy. He stated that the board is in the position to maintain the confidence of the public and government while understanding the mission and direction of the university. He concluded that the board should serve as the keystone body between the institution and external agencies because "university organization no longer optimizes the three values of corporate

autonomy, state support, and academic self-government. A new balance [among the three] is necessary, or the squeeze on autonomy seems destined to continue and get worse" (p. 9).

University governance structure. The academic governance of Canadian universities originates at the level of the department--a 20th century phenomenon. Prior to World War I professors were hired to teach at a university per se and not in any department. Watson (1992, p. 119) outlined the functions of modern university departments: (a) the faculty members control the curriculum (i.e., content of courses, teaching processes, student advising, and examining), and (b) the department organizes and assigns the work of faculty, and serves as a research-producing, disseminating, and evaluating unit. The next step in the hierarchy occurs as the departments are grouped into faculties under the leadership of a dean. Along with department council meetings there are faculty council meetings which discuss issues of importance to the faculty unit. The third level constitutes the senior administration with powers to "respond, encourage, support, or veto; but it is constrained by committees and councils such as the Academic Council" (p. 119). The fourth level consists of the General Faculties Council (GFC)--academic Senate outside Alberta and Saskatchewan --along with the Board of Governors. The GFC concerns itself with academic matters while the Board has the financial health of the university as its primary responsibility. At the last level, there is the government agency responsible for overseeing higher education in each province. (See Figure 2.1.)

However, the debate on university academic planning and governance is not confined to philosophical and conceptual differences between parties internal and external to the university. Within the institutions, the question of university governance (i.e., "does the administration or faculty *run* the university?") is being

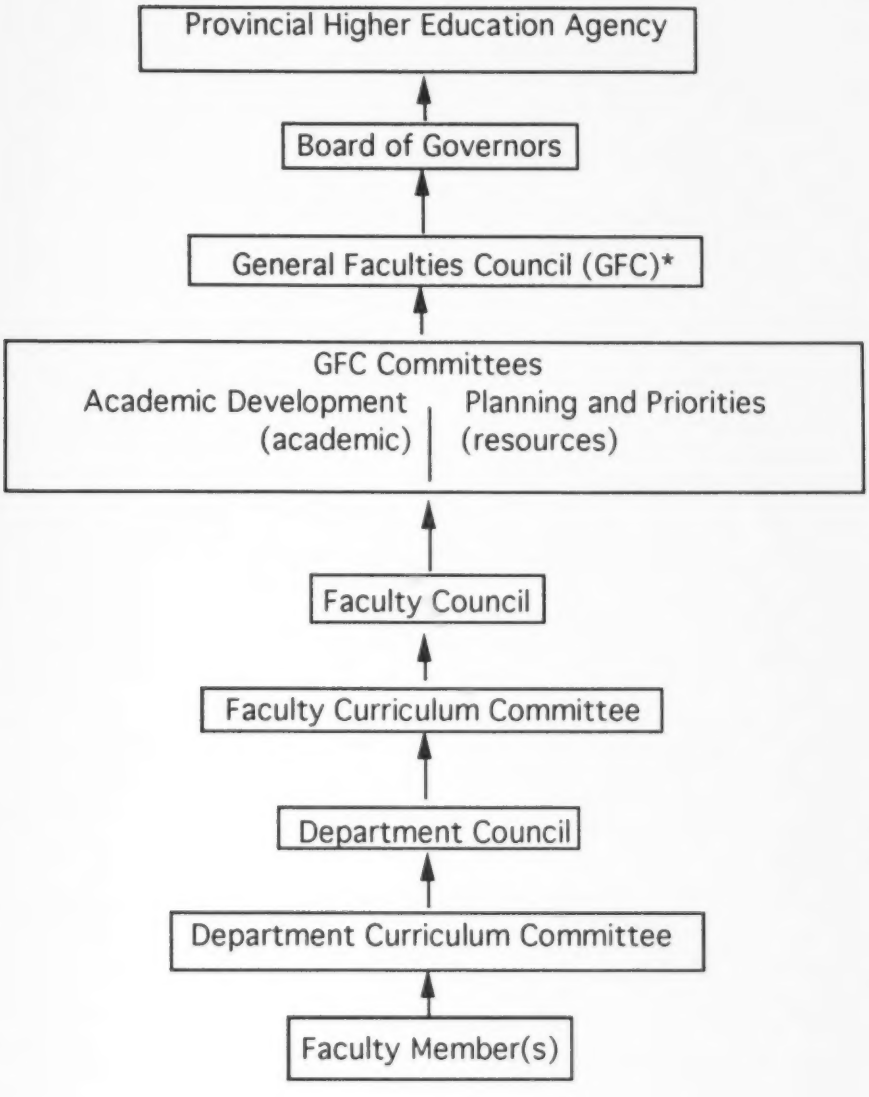

Figure 2.1: Typical approval path of academic planning process in Canadian universities (*Outside Alberta and Saskatchewan the GFC is called the Senate.)

discussed with increasing zeal as demonstrated in both the formal (Gumport, 1993) and informal (letters to the editor and journalistic articles) literature sources.

Academic planning process. Academic planning is usually initiated by faculty members at the department level (Watson, 1992). Then the new program proposal is passed through the planning committees of the university and to the provincial government agency responsible for ratifying higher education programs and possibly providing funding. At each level the proposal must be assessed and approved before it proceeds--what Cerych and Sabatier (1992) referred to as "veto points--'green lights', approvals or signatures" (p. 1007). Each university has unique features in its planning process. Figure 2.1 illustrates an approval path which is generally representative of universities in Canada.

Autonomy and accountability. According to Altbach (1989a), "professorial and institutional autonomy is increasingly challenged by accountability--the demand that universities be answerable to external authority for the expenditure of funds and ultimately for their activities and products" (p. 3). Hartmark and Hines (1986) addressed the issue of accountability in higher education when they discussed the increase in the number of program and policies reviews by agencies external to higher educational institutions. They also stated that higher educational activity is dependent upon some form of public support or governmental regulation and that "the long-cherished myth of the separation of education from politics has lost its claim to reality" (p. 3).

However, Brubacher (1977) illustrated the traditional strength of autonomy within and of universities when he reported the decision of the Michigan Supreme Court in a contest between the legislature and Michigan State University regents: "The university enjoys the independence of a fourth branch of government [the other three being legislative, executive, and judicial]" (p. 27). More recently, the Supreme Court

of Canada, in a December 1990 decision on an appeal by academic staff in Ontario and British Columbia who were fighting mandatory retirement, strengthened the view of autonomy. As reported by Andrews (1994, May 3), the Court stated each university is

> its own master in respect to employment of professors. The government has no legal power to control them. Their legal autonomy is fully buttressed by their traditional position in society. Any attempt by government to influence university decisions, especially decisions regarding appointment, tenure, and dismissal of academic staff, would be strenuously resisted by the universities on the basis that this would lead to breaches of academic freedom. (p. 3)

In his five-year analysis (1986-1990) of articles in the *Review of Higher Education* that explicitly dealt with the "state," Rhoades (1992) supported the academics' traditional, pessimistic view of political involvement in higher education by saying that in day-to-day matters of higher education the government is considered to be external but has ultimate authority over higher education. However, he added that the government is "a threat to the internal integrity of higher education organizations" (p. 92). He further explained some reasons for this perception:

> The images that higher education practitioners and scholars have of the state are filtered through their images of themselves and of colleges and universities. . . . We see and present ourselves [as professionals] in terms of meritocracy and expertise. . . . We see ourselves and our institutions as different from other sorts of enterprises, and requiring greater autonomy vis-a-vis political and bureaucratic concerns, pressures and organizations. . . . Our conception of ourselves and of academic enterprises assumes that we are or should be independent [and neutral] relative to major societal institutions and structures of power. (p. 84)

Several features set the professoriate apart from other professions. The most obvious is that they are professionals in the traditional sense, but their professional independence on academic matters has to function within the bureaucratic environment of the university. As Altbach (1989a) has stated,

> they are unlike the traditional liberal professions such as law and medicine, in which the practitioners have control over their work environment. The academic profession depends on salaries from the universities (in many cases, ultimately from the government) and in many countries, professors are civil servants. . . . [However] the academic profession sees itself as being unique

> and demands the prerequisites of a profession. Most societies rank the professoriate highly and accord it professional status. (p. 3)

Hartmark and Hines (1986) described this "accountability versus autonomy" controversy by presenting some of the factors which affect higher education's situation including "increased competition for public funds; problems with inflation, productivity, and enrollment; a perceived decline in the value of a degree; and the recurrent imbalances in the supply of and demand for trained manpower" (p. 12).

Academic freedom and tenure. As reported by Cameron (1990), academic freedom and tenure were privileges and then rights eventually won by the faculty members of all Canadian universities. These rights are far from new. Metzger (1973) traced their beginnings to 1158 AD and the court of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. The Emperor issued an edict promising scholars "protection from attack upon their domiciles and compensation for unlawful injury" (p. 94). Other countries followed suit and for centuries the cherished institution, as described by Miller (1987), "joined the far-reaching Roman papacy to shield university scholars from their would-be plunderers and assailants" (p. 95).

During periods of university development, the right of tenure was considered *sacrosanct* (Miller, 1987). Interest in debating tenure has ebbed and flowed. Presently, the debate has regained prominence in and about academia, as described by Miller (1987, p. 95), who stated that this renewed interest in tenure was brought about by several reasons. First, there were the student unrest and riots in the 1960s, which created a loss of public confidence in the academics who were often viewed as neutral or supporting student causes. Second, a sharp downturn in the economy created further ire about individuals having overly secure jobs. Finally, Miller noted that there was a concern that the rapid professional hiring in the 1960s may have been at the price of quality control and that tenure was protecting inferior academics.

Fincher (1986) stated that "universities are unique in the educational realm in that they teach well what they are best prepared to teach: those areas of specialization that merit and sustain the research and teaching interests of the faculty" (p. 277). Robinson and Moulton (1985) emphasized that the main defense of tenure is that it "protects academic freedom--the freedom of a faculty member to do research and teach in areas that may be unpopular with colleagues." However, they cautioned that "tenure protection can be abused" (p. 45). Moreover, it does not provide *carte blanche* coverage for all situations. Kilgour (1994) reported on the decision of a hearing committee established at a Canadian university to determine whether there were grounds to dismiss a tenured faculty member. She added that tenure is justified on the grounds that it frees the academics from the fear that they may be dismissed or disciplined by their employer for pursuing research and teaching ideas that may be regarded as "dangerous, misguided, or irrelevant to the perceived needs of society" (p. 7). However, the hearing committee, ruling against the faculty member, stated that he was dismissable by the university for "gross misconduct on a cumulative basis" and that the "principles of tenure and academic freedom have little to do with this case" (p. 7).

Warrack (1990) discussed a proactive stance on tenure when he offered the following opinion:

> we [universities] have got to deal with the tenure issue. The 'baggage' of its public unpopularity is wounding us gravely with the taxpaying public. If we have the will, I believe it is within our collective wit to deal effectively with the tenure issue. We should do so on our own terms, thus precluding it being done badly by governments under pressure from the public. (pp. 6-7)

Warrack further promoted the philosophical stance that universities are as unpopular as elected governments and that as university people the academic staff must be very honest with themselves: "We are the social critics, but rarely of ourselves. I think we would be well-served by that frankness being extended to ourselves"

(pp. 4-5). He concluded his comments by saying that we have to be accountable mainly to the public because "if we're okay with the public, we're going to be okay with the government . . . our problem is not with government, it is with the public" (pp. 5-6). This position of being unpopular, however, was refuted by the Angus Reid survey of November 1992 which indicated that 83% of the sample of "typical Canadians" were pleased with the performance of Canadian universities (Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada, March, 1993).

Accountability and measurement of program quality. One of the current foci of external agencies, and especially provincial and state governments, is whether value-for-money is being achieved within universities (Weiss, 1988; Dill, 1992; Seymour, 1992; Harvey and Green, 1993; and Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 1994). In this context, accountability refers, for the most part, to such terms as (a) relevant education, (b) responsiveness in academic planning, and (c) achievement of educational value for public money. However, a difficulty continues in defining relevant education. A program that is relevant for one may not be of interest to others. Further, defining and measuring educational relevance remain elusive.

Throughout the calls for accountability, the question of academic credibility continues to be paramount. Watson (1992) quoted a maxim which appears to apply throughout the world: " 'It takes an academic to judge another academic or academic expertise, academically' " (p. 124). However, as also stated by Watson (1992), the matter of standards becomes a public concern especially when calls for financial accountability are prominent--"the money was spent honestly [and] spent well" (p. 124). Watson described the contentious issue of *either* accountability *or* autonomy in this way:

> Academics have a profound mistrust of lay ability to pronounce on the latter question [money being spent well]. Until recently, Canadian governments have left judgments of quality entirely to academics. Questions are now being raised, though, as to whether the nation needs to have all these programs of a similar type, however academically acceptable, and some academics have asked whether the accepted standard is sufficiently high. (p. 124)

The concern for loss of autonomy was demonstrated when Hartmark and Hines (1986, p. 12) cited the *Carnegie Commission on Higher Education* which reported "the greatest shift of power in recent years has taken place not inside the campus, but in the transfer of authority from the campus to outside agencies."

However, as stated by Farquhar (1994), by taking a proactive position in evaluating university programming, academics "are strengthening rather than demolishing our essential autonomy and diversity" (p. 17). Further, in a 1993 Australian government report on quality of university programs in that country (see Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 1994) a review committee was struck "as a further step in a sequence of university and governmental actions over many years rather than as an isolated instance of government intervention" (p. 4). Also, the report stated that "the present focus on quality in higher education reflects the general societal interest in more effective performance leading to greater customer satisfaction" (p. 3).

Some of the reasons why program reviews are necessary at this phase of higher education evolution were given in the Australian 1993 review of programs (See Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 1994). In this report, the work of Lewis and Smith (1994) was cited and provided an overall rationalization for quality reviews. Lewis and Smith stated that program reviews are

> entirely appropriate, given the level of disaffection with the performance of universities expressed over the past decade in numerous books, reports and commentaries. . . . [The] generally defensive, closed-system response of attacking the critics and ignoring the critique is inappropriate--indeed the negative mode of response contradicts the intellectual heritage and ideals of universities. (p. 2)

The report offered further reasons for program reviews. One reason is the change in demographics of the students--higher median age and greater part-time involvement, as examples. Another reason relates to the increasing level of market forces and competition within higher education. Students will be evaluating different programs to determine what is best for them. Accurate information from reviews will be necessary to assist the students. Still another reason for reviews is the changing instructional technology and program delivery methodology (e.g., distance education). Information will be needed to improve these innovative programs. Finally, as the report states, "limited economic growth anticipated in the coming decade will limit the funds available for a variety of social purposes with higher education expansion not being seen as such a high priority" (p. 2).

Reasons why program reviews are resisted by faculty members usually revolve around two issues: (a) the fundamental principle held by academics at the universities that they know best what to offer, and (b) reviews are not accurate and do not present an appropriate view of what is being taught. One of the complaints in this latter issue has been the tendency for the reviews to measure performance outcomes of graduates. This approach has been criticized at length for inherent inaccuracy in the methodology (e.g., Mortimer and Bragg, 1982).

Ramsden (1994) offered an innovative approach to reviewing quality of academic programs. He recommended that instead of attempting to measure quality from the graduates who have had varied intellectual experiences both inside and outside the classroom, the attention should be directed towards an instructional self-audit, assuming that if the program instruction is improved then the quality of the program will improve. Several universities in Canada--the University of Alberta, Dalhousie University, and Acadia University, as examples--have established faculty professional development centres to improve the pedagogic skills of the faculty

members. Although this is not responsiveness in a program addition sense, this does demonstrate how universities are responding to the demands by its students for better instruction. (See Smith, 1991b.)

This brief chronicle sets the context for the tensions inherent in today's universities. Long-established but hard-fought fundamental principles such as academic freedom, tenure, and institutional independence granted during the evolution of Canadian higher education and especially within the university sector are being challenged. Ziegler (1993) described the atmosphere well when he stated that debate on the context of the modern university "puts a hot fire under the feet of those who say that the university is a *sanctum sanctorum*, an entity unto itself and woe betide any infidel who would challenge it" (p. D1).

Summary

There has been much debate about academic program content being offered by universities today. Concerns, either perceived or real, which pertain to irrelevant content along with an overly methodical decision-making process and a "sheltered" faculty have created a negative view of universities in some quarters. In the executive summary of research report number five (Public Affairs Management, 1991), written for the *Commission of Inquiry on Canadian University Education* (Smith, 1991b), the authors found that provincial government officials were quite critical of the attitudes and behavior of universities towards governments, communities, and undergraduate standards. The consensus in this report (Public Affairs Management, 1991) accentuated the failure of universities to keep up with the changing societal demands because they "have not remained relevant and are either unwilling or unable to change. The words most frequently used to describe them [universities] were 'remote', 'isolated', 'elitist', 'arrogant', and 'naive' " (Executive Summary).

However, Michael, Holdaway, and Small (1993) in their paper on administrators' perceptions of the resource environment in Alberta's higher education institutions commented that "many misconceptions were perceived to exist within the general public about the affairs of Alberta post-secondary institutions" (p. 14). Thus, identifying and then understanding the context in which decisions are made and from which complaints are generated are essential in resolving conflicts both internal and external to the university.

Figure 2.2 illustrates some of the many factors to be considered when deciding upon academic program changes at a university. The degree of responsiveness of university academic planners can be assessed by the extent to which factors such as these are met. Many of the factors listed in the following table can be considered to have the potential to move among the four categories. Further, the various stakeholders in university academic planning may perceive differently the need, importance, and practicality of each factor when considering changes to university programming.

Figure 2.3 demonstrates the process through which a proposal for either a new or revised academic program must travel prior to implementation and refinement. Of note in this figure is the potential for interaction with internal as well as external sources.

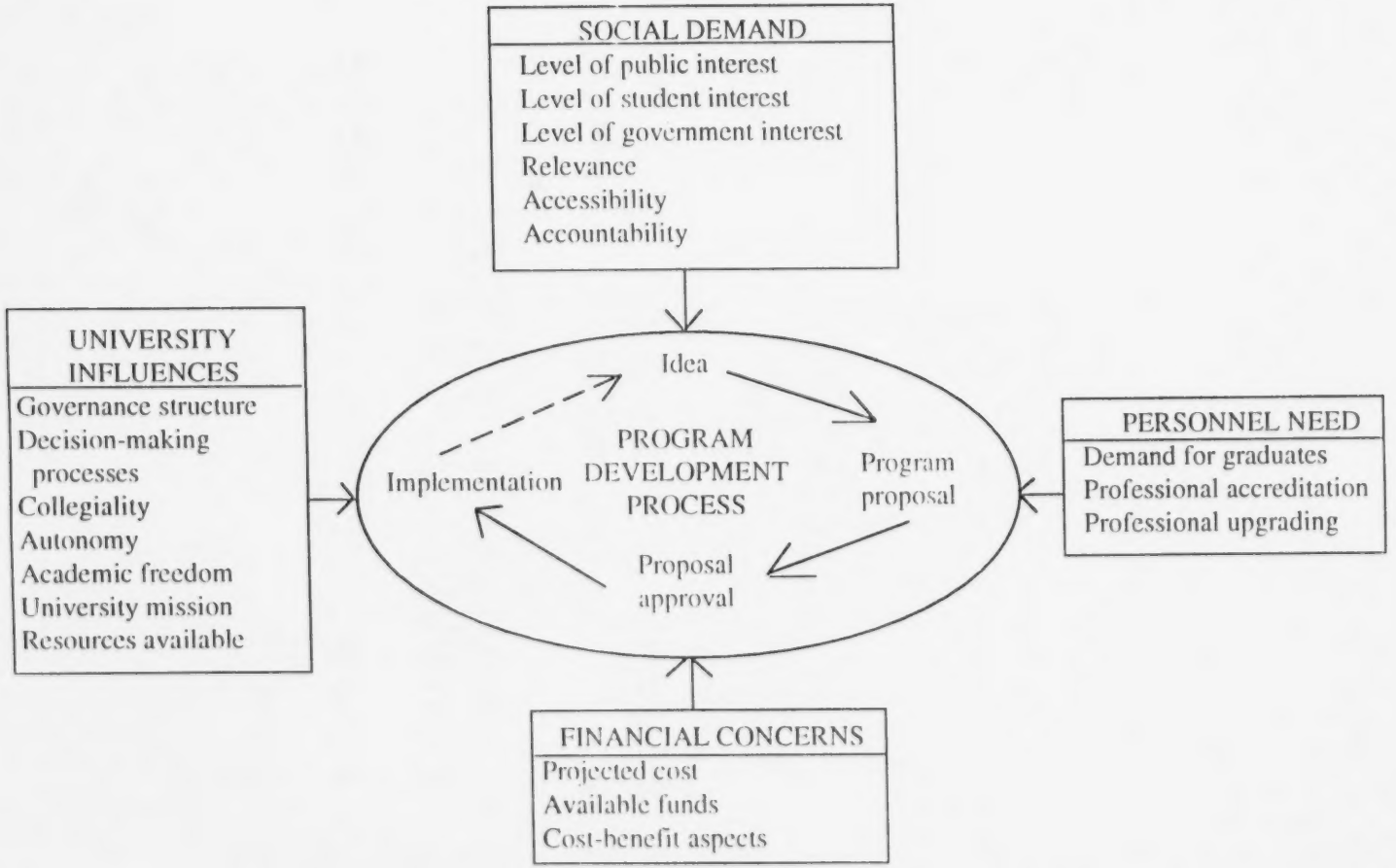

Figure 2.2 Influences upon generation of ideas, development of proposals, and approval of proposals for new academic programs and major modifications to existing programs

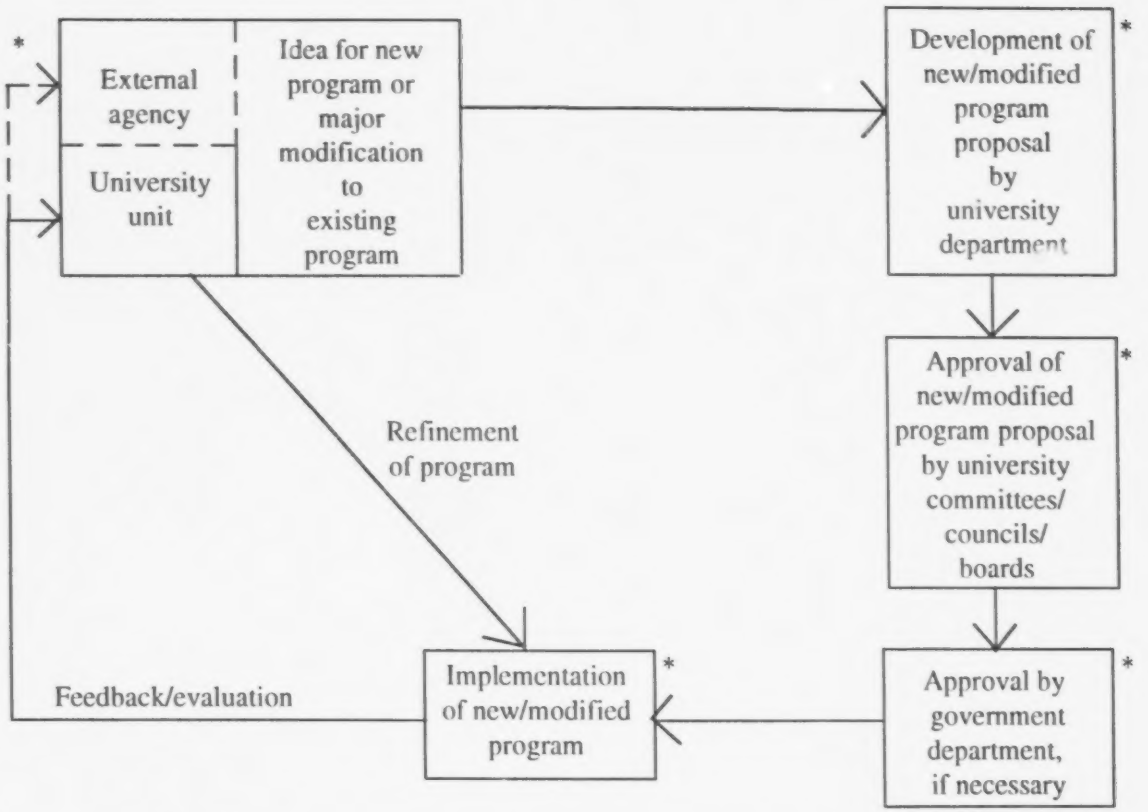
External agency
University unit
Idea for new program or major modification to existing program
Development of new/modified program proposal by university department
Approval of new/modified program proposal by university committees/ councils/ boards
Approval by government department, if necessary
Implementation of new/modified program
Refinement of program
Feedback/evaluation
*
* indicates potential for internal/external interaction to occur

Figure 2.3 Flow diagram of university academic planning and approval process

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

Perceptions of responsiveness within universities have many facets. Three data-gathering methods provided the information for the study.

Questionnaire for vice-presidents (academic). A questionnaire (Appendix A) based on principles of program development identified in the literature was mailed to 45 vice-presidents (academic) of selected universities across Canada. They were asked to provide their perceptions of academic planning processes at their universities. They were also asked to evaluate the importance of each of the listed strategies and principles. The overall usable return rate was 75.6% (34 out of 45).

Questionnaire to Corporate-Higher Education Forum. At the same time, a different questionnaire (Appendix B) was sent to 33 corporate (i.e., non-university) board members of the Corporate-Higher Education Forum (CHEF), a national forum based in Montréal. CHEF's membership consists of senior administrators of universities and businesses. They were asked to provide their perceptions of the responsiveness of university academic planners to academic demands and to evaluate the importance of selected criteria listed in managing program change. The overall return rate was 72.7% (24 out of 33), but six were returned unanswered with each having a rationale for the noncompletion of the questionnaire. The usable return rate was therefore 54.5% (18 out of 33).

On-campus interviews. Interviews (Appendix C) were conducted at several levels of the University of Alberta hierarchy--faculty members, chairs of departments, deans, and individuals with senior academic and administrative experience. The purpose of the interviews was to determine the university personnel's perceptions of program development, including how responsive they are, and should be, in meeting the needs of several constituencies. The information so provided was

considered together with the results of the questionnaires completed by the vice-presidents (academic) of Canadian universities and the non-university members of the Corporate-Higher Education Forum.

Method

Questionnaires

Rationale for questionnaire design. Brink and Wood (1983, p. 252), supported by Glesne and Peshkin (1992) and Locke, Spirduso and Silverman (1993), stated that the function of the overall framework which guides a research study is to arrange for the collection of data in a manner that combines relevance for the research purpose with economy in methodology. One purpose of this study was to describe the factors relating to the academic planning and approval processes in selected Canadian universities. This information was offered by the vice-presidents (academic) (VPA) of 34 anglophone universities in Canada. Also, input was sought from the non-university individuals of the Corporate-Higher Education Forum (CHEF) who were situated across the country. The territorial expanse and time expenditure made it impractical to interview each VPA or member of CHEF; thus, another data-gathering activity was necessary for the study. A questionnaire format--one questionnaire designed for the VPAs and a separate form for the members of CHEF--was used. On each questionnaire there were opportunities for written comments via open-ended questions.

Development of the questionnaires. Both questionnaires used a response scale. In order to determine the criteria used by academics in program planning, a two-fold approach was used to gather appropriate information in the development of the questionnaire. As a first step in identifying what questions were to be asked in the VPAs' questionnaire, information was provided from 11 of the 13 VPAs who were purposefully selected and reached by letter across the country. These

13 individuals were considered by this researcher and his advisor as being a representative sample of the anglophone universities in Canada. Each VPA was asked to address these questions:

1. If an external agency (e.g., a professional association, business, or interest group) wished to recommend introduction of a new program in a designated department of the particular university, what process would be followed with respect to sponsorship by the department and/or faculty?

2. What are the criteria used for adoption and implementation of any new program, either internally or externally generated?

3. Finally, what is the decision-making path through the university?

Second, a review of the literature assisted in determining the criteria presently being used at higher education institutions in developing and approving new or revised program proposals. To improve the potential for greater respondent compliance, the CHEF questionnaire was based on the VPA questionnaire but modified to 18 questions. Various terms were used in both questionnaires--activities, criteria, and functions. In a general sense, activities and functions can also be viewed as criteria.

The criterion validity of each of the variables presented in the questionnaires was established by referral to the literature and by a request to the respondents for their input concerning the importance of the selected criteria. Further, a pilot test using feedback from four expert researchers was conducted.

To obtain an overview of the questionnaire participants, demographic information was sought from each respondent. At the time of completion the VPAs had a mean of 10.7 years of experience on a senior academic planning committee within a university. The majority of the VPAs (30) referred in their answers to the university where they were presently employed while four referred to universities in general. Of the CHEF respondents, 14 were employed in a business, three were

professionals, while one did not comment. Twelve of them had never served on an academic planning committee of a university, while five had. Of the five who had served on a committee, one had been a faculty member, two served on senate or GFC, and two on the board of governors.

University of Alberta Interviews

Rationale for interviews. The information from the questionnaires provided broad knowledge from different regions and institutions across the country and across several sectors of society. However, a more complete picture of the University of Alberta's responsiveness when assessed in terms of planning principles and actual practices, was achieved through the on-campus interviews. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) illustrated some unique reasons for interviews which supported their use in this study:

> The opportunity to learn about what you cannot see and to explore alternative explanations of what you do see is the special strength of interviewing in qualitative inquiry. To the above sets of circumstances add the serendipitous learnings that emerge from the unexpected turns in discourse that questions evoke. (p. 65)

Information from this study provided these *serendipitous learnings* which became major themes, though they were not part of the initial research question.

Interview strategy. Providing an opportunity for individuals who are aware of the specific variables to express themselves fully allowed for a greater disclosure of many factors. Interviews were conducted at the University of Alberta with faculty members, chairs of departments, and deans who were from the units on campus where the impetus for program-specific changes was concentrated and who had sought approval for either new programs or major revisions to existing programs at the university. Programs and individuals were identified by reviewing the GFC minutes from the years 1988-1993. Table 3.1 displays the types of programs which were approved by the University's GFC during this time period.

Table 3.1

Program Proposals Approved by General Faculties Council
of the University of Alberta Between
September 1988 and May 1993

	Profession-based	Discipline-based	
Degree Type	n	n	Totals
Undergraduate	7[a]	1[b]	8
Graduate:			
Master's	4	1	5
Combined Master's/ Doctoral	1	1	2
Doctoral	2	0	2
Totals	14	3[c]	17[d]

Notes: a One of these programs was not approved by the Alberta Department of Advanced Education.

b The one discipline-based undergraduate program evolved out of a need to respond to changes in society. There were no new humanities or social science programs listed in the 1988-1993 GFC minutes.

c These 3 programs are in the medical/biological sciences area.

d The new programs were almost equally divided between graduate (5 master's, 2 doctorate, plus 2 combined) and undergraduate (8): 14 of the 17 new programs were profession-based.

The questions for deans, department chairs, and faculty members are shown in Appendix C. Each individual approached agreed to be interviewed. In total, 17 interviews were conducted with individuals who had recent experience with the development and approval processes of specific programs at the University of Alberta. Further, four individuals with senior academic and administrative experience from the University of Alberta were approached and also agreed to be interviewed. (See Appendix C). Their questions were not as program-specific as were the questions in the other interviews.

A pilot study of the interview questions was conducted with two individuals (a student colleague and a faculty member) to determine the validity of questions and to familiarize the interviewer with the process. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) suggested that pilot respondents be asked to be in a critical frame of mind "so that they do not just answer the questions (the intent is not to gather data) but, more important, that they reflect critically on the usability of the questions" (p. 68).

Trustworthiness. The interview process in this study utilized a naturalistic form of research. According to Guba and Lincoln (1988), "naturalists assume that there exist multiple realities which are, in the main, constructions existing in the minds of the people" (p. 81). They further stated that these constructions can be studied only in an evolving contextual format and that the inquiry process will diverge as more and more realities must be considered.

Guba and Lincoln (1988) delineated the trustworthiness of naturalistic enquiry into four terms analogous to internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity of rationalistic enquiry. Respectively, these terms are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. "Credibility" is the degree to which the data and interpretations of the investigator are similar to the "multiple realities in the

minds of the informants" (p. 84). They listed several measures to enhance credibility, two of which were used in this study: (a) peer debriefing to test insights and receive counsel on the evolving design of the study, and (b) interviewee checks, "whereby data and interpretations are continuously checked [with interviewees]" (p. 84).

Their second term, "transferability," refers to the "extent to which the case study facilitates the drawing of inferences by the reader that may have applicability in his or her own context or situation" (Lincoln & Guba, 1988, pp. 20-21). To improve transferability, there was purposive sampling, based on Guba and Lincoln (1988, pp. 84-85), of the University of Alberta decision makers to optimize the range of information collected. Second, through the interviews, a "thick description" of each informant's context was furnished to the researcher to provide to him "a vicarious experience of it and to facilitate judgments about the extent to which a working hypothesis from that context might be transferable to a second, similar, context" (p. 85).

"Dependability" measures are those taken to minimize instability factors associated with the research procedures. During data collection in naturalistic inquiry, dependability makes allowances for research designs to emerge and evolve further, theory to develop, and changes to occur which cannot be referred to as error in procedure (Guba & Lincoln, 1988, p. 84). For this study, a dependability audit or audit trail provided a greater sense of reliance on the procedures. This was based on a fiscal audit as described in Guba and Lincoln (1988, p. 85)--"the accounts were kept in one of the several modes that constitute 'good practice'." In this study, the accounts referred to data collection. The "good practice" included the safekeeping of both the audio tapes and the transcriptions of the tapes in typed form and on computer discs.

"Confirmability" "shifts the emphasis from the certifiability of the inquirer to the confirmability of the data" (Guba & Lincoln, 1988, p. 84). For this study, a

journal was kept and used to note evolution of the investigator's thought and to show why the study was defined and conducted in certain ways along with a confirmability audit which, according to Guba and Lincoln (1988), ascertains that "every entry can be supported with appropriate documentation and that [the information is] properly determined" (p. 85).

However, notwithstanding these measures, Guba and Lincoln (1988) have stated that "it is generally understood that the use of even all of these techniques cannot guarantee the trustworthiness of a naturalistic study but can only contribute greatly to persuading a consumer of its meaning" (p. 85). The researcher took this caution into account throughout the study.

Data Analysis

Four general issues relating to the development of academic program proposals and the extent to which university academic planners are perceived to be responsive were identified from the study's data: development and approval of programs, responsiveness of universities, external agencies and academic change, and communication of the university's mission. Each of the issues is discussed at length in individual chapters of this dissertation with information on the themes and subthemes, as gathered from the interview and questionnaire responses, being considered using the following format. At the beginning of each major theme related to the chapter topic is an introductory paragraph and then sub-sections of the theme. The questionnaire data are presented in the sections "Vice-presidents (academic)" and then the sections entitled "Corporate-Higher Education Forum." The information from the interviews is then presented under the headings "University of Alberta."

Most of the information collected for the study was from the interview transcripts. Each interview was first transcribed by an independent typist. Then this researcher reviewed the transcription while listening to the tapes and made the obvious

corrections between the text and spoken word. The corrected transcriptions were then sent to the interviewees for their feedback. They were asked to pay particular attention to several areas. First, with the often difficult differentiation on audio tape between words such as "can/can't, are/aren't, and could/couldn't," they were asked to assure that the appropriate word had been typed in accordance with their comments. Second, they were presented with the opportunity to revise (i.e., change, add to, or delete) any of the comments which did not accurately reflect their thinking on a certain question. Finally, they were reminded that the information collected was to be aggregated and individuals would not be identified--anonymity and confidentiality were assured.

After review by the interviewees, the information was categorized into subthemes, as described by Rudestam and Newton (1992, pp. 113-114). Further, the information from the questionnaires was individually categorized into these subthemes. Relevant direct quotations are included in Chapters 4-7, but some wording has been altered slightly to improve readability without affecting the substance of the quotations.

The interview data were descriptive and focused on the major issues. The questionnaires provided quantitative data which were analyzed with frequency distributions and cross tabulations. In order to take into account the response patterns of the VPAs and CHEF members on the different scales--*current level of activity* of university academic planners and *degree of perceived importance*--the mean of means was calculated and used in the analysis, in addition to identification of the sets of items with the highest and lowest means.

Also, the data were compared across groups to determine the degree of similarity among interest groups (e.g., planning departments of universities with business interests). The data were analyzed to test for relationships (a) among the stakeholders' perceptions of responsiveness and (b) between the importance of the criteria and the degree of responsiveness. Information from the data analysis was used

to describe the present status of academic program planning and approval processes at universities. Recommendations for implementation of new program initiatives or major revisions to existing programs were generated based on the information obtained and the researcher's insights into the topic.

Ethical Considerations

The respondents in the study were informed by a covering letter of the nature and rationale for the study. Also, they were told that the requirements for ethical considerations as outlined by the University of Alberta were met by the researcher before the study began. The focus or purpose of the study did not change, so the researcher did not have to notify the participants of any changes. There was no risk of physical or mental harm to the respondents. All information that could identify individuals or their institutions in the case of the questionnaires remained anonymous and was reported in aggregate form as opposed to individual disclosure. Along with the anonymity of the responses, all data were kept in a secure location to which only the researcher had access. Finally, every respondent had the right to withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason.

Summary

The data collection methods used in this study were designed to obtain both breadth and depth of information on the topics of academic program development and perceptions of responsiveness. The questionnaire format offered perspectives from different regions of the country. The interview participants provided a thicker description of the general and specific questions, especially as they related to the University of Alberta. The dual approach--questionnaires and interviews--to addressing this study's questions assisted in validating the trustworthiness and applicability of the information.

CHAPTER 4

DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF PROGRAMS

This chapter presents data from the interviews and questionnaires relevant to the development and approval processes for new academic programs at Canadian universities. How these processes reflect the degree of responsiveness is also considered. Four main themes, each with sub-themes, are reviewed: (a) the impetus for developing the new program or major revision of an existing program and then the evolution of the proposal; (b) the importance of defining and fulfilling the needs of various constituencies; (c) information on support for the new proposal; and (d) the variables associated with culmination of the process (e.g., length, delay factors, and approval path).

Impetus and Evolution of Program Proposals

This section presents the findings related to Specific Research Question 1.1: "How are program proposals initiated?" and Specific Research Question 1.2: "How frequently do external agencies suggest program changes and how influential are these agencies?" Included is information from the vice-presidents' (academic) and CHEF questionnaires and from the interviews with faculty members and present and former senior academic administrators at the University of Alberta.

Proposal Origins

Vice-presidents (academic). The vice-presidents (academic) (VPA) were not asked specifically in their questionnaire how a new program proposal is initiated. However, when asked the questions relating to their assessment of program proposals and to the extent to which the academic planners listen to various stakeholders (e.g., faculty members, students, professionals and business personnel, provincial government officials, and the public-at-large) the VPAs' responses unequivocally

supported the practice of listening to faculty members in the first instance and stressed the importance of this practice (Table 4.1). In fact, in ranking all the responses to the 39 questions in the VPA questionnaire, input from faculty members ranked first with a mean of 4.50 on current practice and also first with a mean of 4.27 on the importance of this practice. One of the vice-presidents responded in this way:

> The important work on program changes occurs at the department and faculty and since normally the faculty will have to pay for a program change's costs, it doesn't come forward to the university's 'academic planners' until it has been more or less approved by the Dean and appropriate VP.

Further, input from the public-at-large ranked last in both extent of *current activity* (mean = 1.94) and perceived *importance* of this practice (mean = 2.68).

Corporate-Higher Education Forum. Members of the Corporate-Higher Education Forum (CHEF) were not asked specifically in their questionnaire how they perceived that a new program proposal evolves and how much input from faculty members and students are considered by academic planners when assessing proposals for program addition or revision. However, they were asked questions relating to the extent to which they perceive that the academic planners listen to the other stakeholders such as professionals and business personnel, provincial government officials, and the public-at-large.

The data in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 indicate that the corporate respondents perceived that academic planners listen more to provincial government officials than the planners stated they do (mean of 3.44 vs. a mean of 2.38). Although the perceptions of each group of respondents in this *current activity* question varied, both groups felt that interacting with government bureaucrats at the inaugural stage of development is of little importance. Of much greater importance is reacting to the business community.

University of Alberta. Throughout the interviews with University of Alberta academics, respondents commonly had difficulty identifying the actual starting

Table 4.1

Means of Responses of Vice-Presidents (Academic) on the Extent to Which Academic Planners Obtain Comments from Stakeholders When Assessing or Developing Academic Program Proposals

Activity of academic planners	Current level of activity				Importance of activity			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Obtain information from faculty members	4.50	0.51	1	34	4.27	0.67	1	34
Obtain information from students	3.06	0.92	2	34	3.97	0.76	2	34
Obtain information from professionals in the university's geographic locality	2.84	0.88	3	32	3.42	0.85	3	31
Obtain information from businesses in the university's geographic locality	2.49	0.97	4	33	3.00	0.98	4	32
Obtain information from provincial government officials	2.38	1.24	5	32	2.81	1.03	5	32
Obtain information from public at large	1.94	0.77	6	31	2.68	0.75	6	31
Mean of means *	3.27	0.43	---	---	3.86	0.33	---	---

Notes : 1. The scale for *Current level of assessing criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Considerable extent; 5 = A great deal; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. The scale for *Importance of criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate importance; 4 = Considerable importance; 5 = Great importance; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

3. * Mean of means = mean of responses of vice-presidents (academic) for all of the 39 questionnaire items.

Table 4.2

Means of Responses of Corporate-Higher Education Forum Members on the Extent to Which Academic Planners Obtain Comments from Stakeholders When Assessing or Developing Academic Program Proposals

Activity of academic planners	Current level of activity				Importance of activity			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Obtain information from provincial government officials	3.44	0.82	1	16	2.67	0.69	4	18
Obtain information from professionals in the university's geographic locality	2.63	0.62	2	16	3.28	0.75	2.5	18
Obtain information from business people in the university's geographic locality	2.47	0.51	3	17	3.47	0.62	1	17
Obtain information from public at large	2.38	0.81	4	16	3.28	0.75	2.5	18
Mean of means *	2.98	0.38	---	---	3.69	0.34	---	---

Notes : 1. The scale for *Current level of assessing criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Considerable extent; 5 = A great deal; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. The scale for *Importance of criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate importance; 4 = Considerable importance; 5 = Great importance; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

3. * Mean of means = mean of responses of CHEF members for all 18 questionnaire items.

point of the idea for their new programs. This quotation from one of the interviewees demonstrated a typical reaction: "Well, it's hard to say when these things start. I mean obviously people meet over coffee and say, 'Wouldn't it be nice if . . .?' " Another individual asked "Is it always all that clear as to the beginning point?" In most cases, the program proposals began at the faculty member or department levels as supported by two interviewees who stated that "the drive came internally first" and "it was from the ground up rather than top down." This concept of internal initiation is typical of university planning in Canada (Watson, 1992) and is further demonstrated by personal correspondence from, among others, McGill University, the University of New Brunswick, McMaster University, and The University of Manitoba. Notwithstanding this generality, a discussion relating to the involvement of external agencies in program development is presented in detail in Chapter 6 of this document.

Of the 17 proposals discussed during the on-campus interviews, 12 evolved out of an awareness by faculty members of the need for new program directions. Of the other five proposals--all related to professional programs--three were a direct response to a formalized request, one was a requirement from an external (i.e., professional) agency, and one was in response to meeting the needs of a unique population.

Development of Programs

Understanding the many complex issues related to the developmental and approval processes provides a more complete awareness of university responsiveness in academic planning. This section discusses the issue of program proposal design. Also, a discussion on the planning and approval processes further explains their complex nature. This section relates directly to Specific Research Questions 1.3: "How are proposals for program change developed?" and Specific Research Question 1.4: "How important are selected criteria and activities in development of program proposals?"

Design of Program

The development of either a new academic program or major revisions to an existing program at a university is not a rapid process. As previously stated, the beginning point of the ideas for program addition or change is not easily identified. This difficulty presents itself further as the idea evolves into a program proposal and then into its own academic entity.

Vice-presidents (academic). In relation to the design of a new or revised academic program, the VPAs were asked questions about the degree of consideration they have given to various criteria and the importance of each criterion. Table 4.3 shows the means of their responses to *current level of consideration,* ranked in descending order. The first item in this table--"proposal has sufficient courses in the major field or discipline"-- ranked first in *current level of consideration* (mean=4.15) but eighth in *importance* of this criterion (mean=3.88). However, the second item in this table--"proposal reflects academic needs of students"--ranked second overall in both *current level of consideration* (mean=4.09) and first in *importance* (mean=4.62).

The item "proposal provides a balance of faculty interests and student academic needs" had a mean (3.36) which was above the mean of means for *current level of consideration* (3.27) but its mean for *importance* was slightly below the mean of means (3.86). Further, another item--"proposal meets students' needs for personal academic development"--had a mean value equal to the mean of means (3.27) for *current level of consideration* but above (mean = 4.16) the mean of means for *importance* (3.86), possibly suggesting that more could be done in this essential area of meeting the students' personal academic development.

The last item in the table--"proposal fits with the priorities and policies of the provincial government"--ranked the lowest in both *current level of consideration* and *importance of criterion* when the design of the program is being considered. Thus, less

Table 4.3

Means of Responses of Vice-Presidents (Academic) on the Extent to Which Criteria for Assessing New Academic Program Proposals Are Considered and the Perceived Importance of These Criteria in Program Development

New academic program proposal criterion	Current level of consideration				Importance of criterion			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Proposal has sufficient courses in the major field or discipline	4.15	0.76	1	33	3.88	0.78	8	33
Proposal reflects academic needs of students	4.09	0.71	2	34	4.62	0.55	1	34
Proposal fits with the needs and requirements of the relevant scholarly disciplines	3.79	0.74	3.5	33	4.03	0.77	6.5	33
Proposal reflects interests of faculty member(s)	3.79	1.04	3.5	34	3.21	0.91	15	34
Proposal meets the curricular needs of the various professions (i.e., provides specialized skills and knowledge)	3.76	0.83	5	33	3.78	1.04	10	32
Proposal fits with the mission of the university	3.62	0.89	6	34	4.49	0.67	2	33
Proposal includes general education components, (e.g., arts and science courses, social and philosophical analysis)	3.55	0.93	7	31	4.03	0.90	6.5	32
Proposal provides the opportunity for sufficient electives	3.46	0.83	8	33	3.78	0.61	10	32
Proposal differentiates new program content from existing content	3.38	0.94	9	32	3.78	0.83	10	32
Proposal provides a balance of faculty interests and student academic needs	3.36	0.78	10	33	3.76	0.75	12	33
Proposal meets students' needs for personal academic development	3.27	1.02	11	34	4.16	0.72	5	32

Table 4.3 (continued)

New academic program proposal criterion	Current level of consideration				Importance of criterion			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Proposal covers a range of learning skills (e.g., critical thinking, communicating thoughts, problem solving)	3.18	0.95	12	31	4.28	0.81	3	32
Proposal offers enhanced opportunity to further develop some of these learning skills	3.12	0.86	13	33	4.19	0.69	4	32
Proposal meets the employment needs of the various professions (i.e., provides a suitable number of graduates)	3.03	0.97	14	32	3.42	0.87	13	33
Proposal meets the curricular needs of the various businesses and industries (i.e., provides specialized skills and knowledge)	2.94	1.06	15	33	3.31	0.97	14	32
Proposal meets the employment needs of the various businesses and industries (i.e., provides a suitable number of graduates)	2.61	1.03	16	33	3.16	0.88	16	32
Proposal fits with the priorities and policies of the provincial government	2.35	0.95	17	33	2.85	0.94	17	33
Mean of means *	3.27	0.43	---	---	3.86	0.33	---	---

Notes : 1. The scale for *Current level of assessing criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Considerable extent; 5 = A great deal; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. The scale for *Importance of criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little importance; 3 = Moderate importance; 4 = Considerable importance; 5 = Great importance; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

3. * Mean of means = mean of responses of vice-presidents (academic) for all of the 39 questionnaire items.

relative importance is placed upon provincial government input and it is viewed as less important than all of the other criteria in this table. This is of particular interest when the response is compared to the literature on university responsiveness and autonomy. Essentially, this finding supported the view held by higher education provincial bureaucrats across Canada that universities are not being responsive--as perceived by their elected representatives--to the wishes of the public (*Public Affairs Management*, 1991, June). It also supported the views of the academics who believe, as stated by Benjamin et al. (1993), that

> no one denies that the universities must be accountable to governments as well as to voters for the large amount of public funds that are spent on the universities. The problem is to marry this need for accountability to the equally important need for university autonomy and for academic freedom. (p. 60)

Corporate-Higher Education Forum. Respondents from the CHEF were asked seven questions which were common to the VPA's questionnaire and which related to the design of a new or revised academic program at a university. Table 4.4 presents the CHEF responses. The data in Table 4.4 show a trend towards an inverse relationship between the *current level of assessing criterion* and *importance of each criterion* within each question (i.e., what is high in one category tends to be lower in the other) and calls for, from the perspective of CHEF members, more emphasis on a better integration of academic planning priorities with the actual practices carried out at universities.

Table 4.5 presents a comparison of opinion among the CHEF and VPA respondents on five of these common questions. The two groups of respondents for the first two items, ranked in descending order of *current activity*, were generally in agreement with the amount of activity and the degree of *importance* of each criterion or activity when their means were compared relative to the mean of means. For the third

Table 4.4

Means of Responses of Corporate-Higher Education Forum Members Pertaining to Activities in Assessing New Program Proposals and the Perceived Importance of These Activities in Program Development

Activity of academic planners	Current level of assessing criterion				Importance of criterion			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Ensure that the proposal fits with the mission of the university	3.47	1.01	1.5	17	3.83	0.92	3	18
Ensure that the proposal meets students' needs for personal academic development	3.47	0.96	1.5	17	3.78	0.65	4.5	18
Ensure that the proposal provides a balance of faculty interests and student academic needs	3.00	0.97	3	16	3.56	0.86	6	18
Ensure that the proposal meets the students' needs for development of appropriate skills	2.77	0.75	4	17	4.22	0.55	1	18
Ensure that the proposal meets the curricular needs of the various businesses, industries, and professions (i.e., it will provide specialized skills and knowledge)	2.71	0.69	5	17	4.17	0.62	2	18
Ensure that the proposal meets the personnel needs of the various businesses, industries, and professions (i.e., it will provide a suitable number of graduates)	2.24	0.44	6	17	3.78	0.73	4.5	18
Mean of means *	2.98	0.38	---	---	3.69	0.34	---	---

Notes : 1. The scale for *Current level of assessing criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Considerable extent; 5 = A great deal; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. The scale for *Importance of criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate importance; 4 = Considerable importance; 5 = Great importance; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

3. * Mean of means = mean of responses of CHEF members for all 18 questionnaire items.

Table 4.5

Means of Responses to Common VPA and CHEF Questions Pertaining to Activities or Criteria Relevant to Assessing New Program Proposals and Perceived Importance of These Activities or Criteria in Program Development

Activity/criterion of academic planners	Vice-Presidents (Academic)		Corporate-Higher Education Forum	
	Current activity (mean)	Import-ance (mean)	Current activity (mean)	Import-ance (mean)
Academic planners ensure proposal fits with the mission of the university	High (3.62)	High (4.49)	High (3.47)	High (3.83)
Ensure that the proposal provides a balance of faculty interests and student academic needs	High (3.36)	Low (3.76)	High (3.00)	Low (3.56)
Ensure that the proposal meets students' needs for personal academic development	Low (3.27)	High (4.16)	High (3.47)	High (3.78)
Proposal meets the curricular needs of the various businesses and industries (i.e., provides specialized skills and knowledge)	Low (2.94)	Low (3.31)	Low (2.71)	High (4.17)
Proposal meets the employment needs of the various businesses and industries (i.e., provides a suitable number of graduates)	Low (2.61)	Low (3.16)	Low (2.24)	High (3.78)

Notes: 1. The scale for *Current level of activity* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Considerable extent; 5 = A great deal; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. The scale for *Importance of activity* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate importance; 4 = Considerable importance; 5 = Great importance; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

3. The mean of means for *current activity* in VPA responses was 3.27.
High for *current activity* in VPA responses was >3.27.
Low for *current activity* in VPA responses was ≤3.27.

4. The mean of means for *importance* in VPA responses was 3.86.
High for *importance* in VPA responses was >3.86
Low for *importance* in VPA responses was ≤3.86.

5. The mean of means for *current activity* in CHEF responses was 2.98.
High for *current activity* in CHEF responses was >2.98.
Low for *current activity* in CHEF responses was ≤2.98.

6. The mean of means for *importance* in CHEF responses was 3.69.
High for *importance* in CHEF responses was >3.69.
Low for *importance* in CHEF responses was ≤3.69.

item--"ensure that the proposal meets the students' needs for personal academic development"--the opinions varied considerably between the groups.

The VPAs tended to perceive that universities were placing less emphasis on this criterion than did the CHEF respondents. In the responses for the last two items in Table 4.5, the CHEF respondents as a group were of the opinion that the degree of *importance* was considerable but that insufficient attention was paid to these criteria. For the VPAs collectively, the means for both items were below the mean of means for *current activity*, and the items were perceived as lower in relative importance. The last two items both involve external variables.

University of Alberta. Throughout the interviews, no one style of program development emerged as "the" way. The dominant characteristic emerging out of the design of all programs was a sense of uniqueness for a particular department or profession. To generalize, every program responded to some form of need that had to be met and was unique to the program: "at that time there was only one other _____ doctoral program in the country"; "at that time it was thought that with those of us in leadership positions getting a little grayer and thinner, that there was soon to be a real shortage"; "up to that point, we had very poor, very little interaction within the industry; it became pretty obvious we had to do something"; and "this graduate program was from a perceived need from people in the field that there was a substantial and a swelling population of people who saw their future in this evolving, interdisciplinary study of _____." The summary statement to describe all programs presented by the interviewees of this study would be that the program in question fitted the needs of a distinctive clientele rather than the program being developed with no particular group in mind; thus, in their minds, the planners were being responsive to someone's needs.

Complexity of Academic Planning Processes

Vice-presidents (academic). Neither the vice-presidents (academic) nor members of CHEF were asked specific questions about the complexity of the planning process. However, using the design of the questionnaire as an example of the complexity of a modern university, one VPA provided this comment:

> I have decided that I cannot fill out the questionnaire in a meaningful way. My major difficulties are two in number. First, you seem to aggregate various functions covered in my institution, in part by Senate committees and in part administratively (i.e., out of my office). That makes answering some questions without a great deal of contextualization very difficult. Secondly, where any subset of your questions might make a great deal of sense in the context of a specific curriculum initiative out of a particular corner of the university, with the university 'taken as a whole' I find the questions difficult to answer without some specific contexts.

Corporate-Higher Education Forum. Several of the CHEF respondents replied in a way which demonstrated their degree of understanding or at least their appreciation of the complexity of universities. They *responded* by not answering the questionnaires, and provided rationales for not doing so. These respondents are individuals who meet on a regular basis with university leaders (usually the president) of Canadian universities. One can assume from these meetings that they have a greater sense of appreciation and understanding for the complex and difficult nature of the planning process in particular and universities in general. The following quotations, taken from the written comments of these CHEF respondents, demonstrated their respect for this complexity:

> After careful consideration, I have concluded that I should not complete the questionnaire. A number of questions presume a level of familiarity with the academic planning process which I do not possess, and I think it would be inappropriate to try to answer on the basis of a few impressions of the university community.
>
> Unfortunately, I cannot reply as I am not adequately informed.

> I do not feel that we are in a position to answer most of these questions. Some universities do it well, some do not. [Academic planning] should reflect assessments of Canada's needs for future prosperity.
>
> I am not in a position to be able to respond knowledgeably to your questionnaire on academic planning.
>
> Mr._____ has reviewed the questionnaire and has elected not to complete it as he views it as being very internally focused and as such does not believe he is sufficiently knowledgeable of university processes to make useful commentary.

Also, one CHEF member commented in his questionnaire that "I hope that your project will be carried out in the context that academic change must be handled within a framework of the university's total strategy."

University of Alberta. The participants in the University of Alberta interviews extensively discussed the academic planning processes at universities and the effect of these processes on responsiveness. The majority of the comments were centered on the complexity of the processes. Some realized the necessity of this detail: "Part of this [detail] is a mechanism to protect the university from what they would see to be frivolous involvement--knee-jerk reactions--as opposed to well-thought through, considered responses to broad-based questions." One senior academic administrator at the University stated that

> sometimes it [the planning process] is very inefficient. But I think people fail to recognize the inefficiency until they're really in the process and I don't even think some people in the University realize it. When you're in your own little discipline you think everybody is thinking the same way you're thinking. There is no one way of doing things at this University.

Others saw the process as being too bureaucratic and the procedures very cumbersome. Another, with senior academic administrative experience at the University, provided this assessment:

> I think this place [U of A] in particular is top heavy with committees in the first place. I would think that if a program proposal has a solid airing at the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Council and has been reviewed externally, then I think you can bypass one or two of these committees.

One professor added that the department in question "went through three years of attempting to respond to the needs of the community but it was slowed down by a bureaucratic process." Also, one interviewee commented that the process is "tortuous, long, and convoluted." This same respondent provided further comment on the purpose of some of the adjudicating committees:

> The process goes through so many committees in which the interests of the individuals who are making decisions on these committees are not apparent. They are presumably representative of the University, but in fact many of them end up representing themselves. Sometimes they may represent the point of view shared by a number of colleagues in their work unit. But by and large they are representing themselves. So in a sense we don't have a kind of a representative group of people who are responsible to any particular constituency for the decisions that they make. Maybe one of the weaknesses of academic planning is the lack of accountability to any constituency other than the amorphous General Faculties Council which is an agglomeration of multiple interests.

The complexity of the bureaucracy in university programming was further recognized by a professor as a drawback to being responsive. He described the consequences of bending the rules to fit the needs and timelines of a specific group of students--in his mind, an administrative way of being responsive. This interview participant, after describing examples of how some steps in the program approval process were set aside, stated that

> those are illustrations of the kind of delays that there were, so that students were in the program, and were attending classes who had not even been admitted. That raised all kinds of problems for us with the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research which was quite upset with us. We tried to be responsive and in being responsive, I think you have to set aside the bureaucracy a bit and you can't follow the rigid rules and regulations that typically are used to process standard applications to programs. It left more than some ripples that hurt us as a Department because they were seeing us as admitting people who were marginally qualified or were not qualified and bending over backwards to accommodate people that should never had been admitted into the program. It has had some negative spillover for us; we have paid a very high price for being involved in that program.

When the academic planning processes were reflected upon by the interviewees, a consistent metaphor seemed to prevail which further described their perceptions of the

processes. This metaphor had a nautical theme--"University [planning] is kind of like an ocean liner. It takes a long time to turn. . . . On the plus side of the ocean liner analog is that a few short-lived currents pushing one way and then the other isn't going to change the general direction that much." Another academic mentioned, "We can't turn and bend with every little breeze and wind that blows because it would be like a rudderless ship." A third respondent added, "You can't change too fast. I don't know how the University of Alberta compares to other universities; certainly it doesn't change with the wind." According to another, "Any big organization has inertia. You don't take the Royal Bank and all of a sudden make it into something different." Another metaphorical term used was "bandwagon" with several individuals identifying the need to avoid bandwagon jumping in academic planning which they perceived to be costly.

Other comments on the pace of responsiveness were offered by the University professors. One expressed frustration when discussing the external reaction to the long planning and approval process: "People always want to compare us with something else. We'll say, 'It is slow but compared to what? Well it's slow compared to an industry; it's slow compared to my company; or it's slow compared to my government departments'." The implication here was that there are different organizational entities with various operating goals and styles--universities have their own styles. Compared to other universities, the University of Alberta is functioning as normal.

These professors' comments on the pace of the planning process gave support to Haughey's (1994) conclusions. Using the University of Alberta as an example, Haughey stated that conventional strategic planning including academic development "may be virtually impossible to realize in Western universities without careful and widely accepted reforms in their governance structure" (p. 23).

Obtaining Support

One dominant theme from the interviews and questionnaires was the need for sufficient support, both tangible and intangible, at all stages of the proposal's development and approval. The most obvious form of support necessary for a proposal to succeed was financial viability both to initiate the program and to allow it to continue. As one professor said, "The financial requirements have held up a lot of programs." However, other forms of support from various sources were deemed essential for the proposal to be promoted. The sections which follow address Specific Research Question 1.5: "How are internal support and external support obtained for program proposals?"

Informal Political Process

Two general forms of support for program proposals--financial and moral--were identified during the interviews. Underlying the discussions on support was the need for political advocacy, in the non-governmental sense, both within and external to the university. This section discusses this informal political process from the internal and external aspects of the university. The political process is critical in determining the success of a proposal, and thus may have a bearing on the degree of responsiveness. The formalized political process of proposal approval by the provincial Department of Advanced Education and Career Development is discussed later in this chapter.

University of Alberta. Every interviewee from the University of Alberta discussed at varying lengths the informal political process within and external to the University's structure. One stated that various people "think of politics as a dirty word and the political process is tainted. In fact it isn't at all. It's a fundamental basis for operating within a democracy, within an organization, and we need to recognize it as such." Moreover, as stated by Haughey (1994), "because of the particularly political

and pluralist nature of the University, the achievement of change is subject to uniquely complex and volatile conditions" (p. 13).

The interviewees' political strategies for achieving success pervaded many of their answers to several questions. One person commented that "enormous preparation and planning are vital along with some lobbying." Another commented on having "checked it out with a few people that I know inside the [Alberta Advanced Education] Department, basically bureaucrats I suppose, and asked for some feedback prior to sending it in for approval." One proponent of a new program sought out the then Minister of Alberta Advanced Education on two occasions when he was visiting the University and asked him about the progress of the proposal in question. A further example which underscores the importance of lobbying is found in the 8 April 1994 edition of *Folio*, the University of Alberta's internal publication. In reference to the proposed restructuring of the University's Faculty of Education, Dr. R. Wilson, President of the University's Association of Academic Staff, told a group gathered to protest the changes that "you need to get out there and start politicking with the people from Arts, Science, and across the campus, students and staff. Make sure that at least some of them are on your side" (Robb, 1994a, p. 3).

However, lobbying is multi-dimensional. The first, as just discussed, is lobbying within the internal structure of any institution. A second thrust involves overtures originating from interest groups external to the University: "But we would have any of the number of lobbyists yearly coming forward with proposals to revise the degree." When asked from whence these lobbyists come, he said, "They're any sort of combination. Industry is coming forward now with some increased pressure." Another commented on the importance of responding to external interest groups: "Partly because the need is there and partly for political reasons. We have to meet it these days--you can't survive as an island unto yourselves at the edge of the University."

A senior academic administrator at the University related a story about an academic proposal which demonstrated the power of lobbying and occasionally the drawbacks:

> The University community generally acquiesced in that proposal because of the perceived strength of the political support for this outside the University and within government. As it turned out that perceived support wasn't there and it was never funded. Yet it was one of the easiest programs that I ever was associated with in terms of putting it through the University machinery because of this perception that not only was there strong support in the community but some of the influential people in government were salivating waiting for this thing to come forward. But it wasn't there when the chips were down.

Another senior academic administrator stated that

> my concern is the response on the part of the University community to these lobbies. If the University is changed in any dramatic fashion from what we think it was, and is, to an institution that becomes more the agent of industry, the fault will be that of people at universities for allowing it to happen.

Support and Approval From Within Universities

Vice-presidents (academic). The vice-presidents (academic) were asked some questions pertaining to support from within the University. Table 4.6 displays the means for their responses. The means of responses to the first four questions were well above the mean of means for both level of *current activity* and degree of *importance*. That is, the VPAs indicated that the activities of assessing that faculty expertise is available, financial support for both start-up and continuation of program will be provided, and that the state of the support services is adequate are important in academic planning and are being carried out sufficiently at the time they completed the questionnaires. The VPAs gave the greatest importance to assuring that financial support is available to initiate and to continue the proposed program (means=4.70 and 4.64).

However, one VPA mentioned that "financial viability is addressed outside the framework of academic planning decisions. The processes are re-integrated at the level of the vice-president (academic)." With respect to support services, another VPA

Table 4.6

Means of Responses of Vice-Presidents (Academic) About Extent to Which Activities Relevant to Assessment of Internal Support for Program Proposals Are Performed and the Perceived Importance of These Activities in Program Development

Activity of academic planners	Current level of activity				Importance of activity			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Academic planners evaluate faculty expertise needed to implement the proposed program	3.94	0.92	1	34	4.47	0.56	3	34
Academic planners assess financial support for initiation of the proposed program	3.79	1.19	2	33	4.70	0.59	1	33
Academic planners assess financial support for continuation of the proposed program	3.67	1.11	3	33	4.64	0.60	2	33
Academic planners evaluate support services for the proposed program (e.g., library, laboratories/equipment, physical plant, computer facilities)	3.53	0.86	4	34	4.29	0.58	4	34
Academic planners assess teaching load of the faculty after proposed program begins	2.82	1.26	5	33	3.87	0.92	5	31
Academic planners assess research load of the faculty after proposed program begins	2.55	1.15	6	31	3.40	1.04	6	30
Mean of means *	3.27	0.43	---	---	3.86	0.33	---	---

Notes : 1. The scale for *Current level of assessing criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Considerable extent; 5 = A great deal; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. The scale for *Importance of criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate importance; 4 = Considerable importance; 5 = Great importance; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

3. * Mean of means = mean of responses of vice-presidents (academic) for all of the 39 questionnaire items.

wrote that this assessment is done at the Faculty level by the dean and chair(s) and further that "deans are responsible for determining whether the Faculty has the capacity to offer a program--faculty, staff, library, etc. Senate Committees would not question this assessment typically (i.e., if the dean is respected)."

The two questions on assessing workload--teaching and research--were essentially at or below the mean of means for both categories--*current activity* and *importance*. This showed that assessing faculty workload is relatively not very important and less time is spent on it. One VPA qualified this finding by writing that "teaching and research loads are treated primarily as contractual items." Another VPA emphasized that a "bottom-up and laissez faire approach to planning suggests that program proponents consider implications of their proposals for their teaching and research workloads; if one cannot do it, one shouldn't propose it!"

Corporate-Higher Education Forum. Table 4.7 displays means of the responses of the CHEF non-University members concerning support for internal academic planning proposals. Of note in this table is that the means of the CHEF responses for the first three questions were the highest for the 18 questions related to perceptions of *current activity*. The first activity--"consider the workload of faculty members"--was deemed to be of lesser relative importance by both the VPAs (mean=3.87) and the CHEF respondents (mean=3.33). However, the CHEF mean for the extent to which the workload of the faculty members was considered (mean=4.00) was much greater than was the CHEF mean for importance of that activity (mean=3.33).

University of Alberta. During the interviews, support within the University as a whole, as well as from the particular faculty and department, was considered of paramount importance in securing favor with the decision makers on whether the proposal would be approved or rejected. This support was based on

Table 4.7

Means of Responses of CHEF Members About Extent to Which Activities Relevant to Internal Support for Academic Program Proposals Are Performed and the Perceived Importance of These Activities in Program Development

Activity of academic planners	Current level of activity				Importance of activity			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Consider the workload of faculty members	4.00	0.63	1	16	3.33	0.77	4	18
Assess financial cost of proposed program	3.69	1.01	2	16	4.24	0.66	1	17
Assess financial support for proposed program	3.63	0.81	3	16	4.00	0.71	2	17
Evaluate support services for the proposed program (e.g., library, laboratories/equipment, physical plant, computer facilities)	3.38	1.03	4	16	3.71	0.67	3	17
Mean of means *	2.98	0.38	---	---	3.69	0.34	---	---

Notes : 1. The scale for *Current level of assessing criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Considerable extent; 5 = A great deal; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. The scale for *Importance of criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate importance; 4 = Considerable importance; 5 = Great importance; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

3. * Mean of means = mean of responses of CHEF members for all 18 questionnaire items.

several factors. First, the extent to which the proposal was thought out and prepared made a substantial difference in whether it would be supported further--"the brief put forward was so clear that there was very little discussion that took place"; "it's a good idea for anybody establishing a program in the future to know that you have to really do your background work before you go to these committee meetings"; and,

> First of all, to get the program in place, we decided that we would pilot it for a couple of years; we wanted to make sure that before there was a program in place, most of the wrinkles in terms of implementation could be seen and we could iron them out.

Another professor said that you had to make sure that

> all the bases were covered. When we finally put together a document that would stand up to scrutiny, we met with the chair of every [associated] department, gave them the proposal ahead of time and asked for any questions, feedback, modifications they would like, concerns in regards to program, etc. We met with the Dean of the Faculty, the President of the University for feedback, plus a few people from other faculties. We met with the University community and asked for their feedback and tried to incorporate their suggestions and modifications into the proposal.

A second factor in achieving support for a proposal was determining how the new program would enhance the overall academic programming of a particular unit or faculty: "We consulted with other departments, divisions, and faculties that would have a vested interest in our doing this kind of thing." Also, several programs were interdisciplinary in nature and this was perceived by the professors to benefit their proposals: "We presumed we would attract applicants from the other disciplines in this Faculty because this is an interdisciplinary program, not department-based." Another stated that it was decided that

> rather than create a new department and make enemies of the other chairs off the top and perhaps seriously impede those departments that have spent a lot of time building up, the way to do this was to have people keep their appointments in home departments and create this as a University-wide division.

Third, the amount of major restructuring, either academic or financial, that would be necessary within a department or faculty often determined the success of the proposal:

"One of the big advantages of the way we did it is that it didn't involve a lot of new courses being developed." Some PhD programs were approved more easily than master's or undergraduate programs, it was believed, because the administrative and academic framework had already been in place with an existing master's program. Further, if a precedent had been set by the earlier approval of a similar program, the approval process usually was smoother: "For one thing because the precedent was already established having a [combined baccalaureate] degree already in place and that program being quite similar, we would have been surprised if people said we do not like your program when one was already in place."

One of the factors associated with restructuring could be the influx of financial support to achieve the changes. One of the senior academic administrators at the University of Alberta stated that in terms of what works as an incentive for change, "I think that money is the best carrot or stick."

Fourth, the extent to which a program interacted with a profession was a factor in how support was achieved internally within the University. As shown in Table 3.1, 14 of the 17 programs approved from the years 1988-1993 by the University's General Faculties Council were profession-based. One of the reasons for the success rate was the degree of external support, either actual or perceived, for the proposed programs. It could be concluded that the University was being responsive to the professional communities: "I think there's a general feeling at the University, in this Faculty in particular, that we want our programs to be connected in the field and that we are looking for ways to do that." Another stated that the particular profession in question was "approached for a critical appraisal of the proposal and letters of support if that was warranted because it would be very important that the profession felt comfortable with the proposal." A further discussion on external support is presented in a later section of this chapter.

One trend that was disclosed from the interviews was the tendency for a proposal to gather easier agreement as it proceeded up the hierarchy of the University's approval process. In other words, for the programs approved by GFC between 1988 and 1993, there appeared to be less opposition to the proposal the closer it got to final approval. Several interviewees stated that most of the opposition occurred at their own departmental or faculty level: "We had to get it passed by our Faculty Council and that was a tough one." Another person stated that "the proposal went fairly smoothly through all of those committees once it had got past Graduate Studies [staff] who made a lot of very valuable suggestions for editorial changes of the proposal."

Support From Sources External to Universities

Specific Research Question 1.5 asked: "How is internal and external support obtained for program proposals?" As the interviews progressed and the questionnaires were returned, this researcher noted that a change of attitude has occurred over the past decade towards receiving support from sources external to the university: "A few years ago we would have told them [external agencies] to go to hell. Now we're exactly at the opposite. We're responding as fast as we can. We think it's terribly important for us to do that." This section explores the degree to which this change has transpired, if at all in some cases. In this section, "external support" refers to a proactive move on the part of the program proponents to seek (i.e., lobby) for support from various affected external constituencies. This context differs from the previous discussion of lobbying in this chapter which portrayed the prime lobbyists as originating from agencies external to the University.

University of Alberta. Proponents of each of the 14 professional program proposals had solicited and received discernible support from members of the various communities such as professional, ethnic, present and potential clientele, and business/industry. One person stated that

> the [professional community in question], including those who had graduated from the program, those who were in the program, and those who were professional who had not been in the program at all immediately saw the advantages of the new program. Their advice was taken as well as providing support. So the community itself was extremely favorable to the idea. This added weight to it at the Faculty level and at the different committee levels which followed.

Another individual described the efforts to lobby the political officials to seek support for a new professional program: "We got [our professionals] from across the whole province involved in a letter writing campaign to their MLAs and we had thousands of letters that went in to the government about this collaborative program so there was support from the professional community for what we wanted to do."

One individual went to industry not just in Alberta but interprovincially as well:

> I sent the proposal to the people that I felt were the stakeholders. I looked at them all across Canada really but I concentrated on the ones here. I gave them a covering letter, and said this is what we're trying to do and we're looking for letters of support. I got a lot of support. So there was a market out there for what I was trying to do. I just talked to the market and they supported it.

However, despite these indications of successful support from industry, this was the undergraduate program referred to in Table 3.1 which had approval by the University's Board of Governors but did not secure ratification from Alberta's Department of Advanced Education.

One of the logistical difficulties associated with gaining external support was mentioned by an interviewee. He stated that they had a problem "looking for funds on our own; the administration likes to do fund-raising as a University to avoid history showing up one day followed by science the next asking the same person or group for funds."

Another program, based in the biological sciences, had sufficient funds from granting agencies to cover the financial cost of the new program: "We didn't have to go

to any agencies other than to mention that our researchers had funding support from national and provincial funding agencies."

In summary, to help achieve success for a program proposal, and thus to be more responsive, external support has been important and this importance is increasing.

Logistics of the Approval Process

Some information was obtained about the logistics of the developmental and approval processes. Specifically, the length of time it takes for the proposal to proceed through the University's approval path was of interest to the respondents. This section reflects on some specifics of these factors with special emphasis on Specific Research Question 1.6: "What are the logistics of approval of program proposals and of the implementation of program change?"

Details of Approval Process

Vice-presidents (academic). The VPAs were asked five questions about the intricacies of the approval process. Table 4.8 provides data about the VPAs' responses to these questions. Of note in Table 4.8 is the considerable importance to realize the need for contemporary changes (mean=4.52) and to accept proposals for academic change (mean=4.34.) These indicated that academic change is a high priority in universities. One could extrapolate then that program changes demonstrate that universities are being responsive. Also, the first portion of these questions illustrated the above average ratings (mean=3.59 for *contemporary change*s and mean=3.94 for *accepting proposals*) for the degree to which acceptance of new academic ideas is currently achieved. These means were the highest in Table 4.8.

The question that ranked third in *current level of activity* (mean=3.33) and fourth in *importance of activity*-(mean=4.16) was "monitor an efficient approval path through the University's academic planning structure." The responses indicated that the approval process is efficient--at least in the eyes of the academics--and it is very

Table 4.8

Means of Responses of Vice-Presidents (Academic) on Questions Relevant to Activities Such as Acceptance, Approval Process, and Timeline of Academic Program Proposals and the Perceived Importance of These Activities in Program Development

Activity of academic planners	Current level of activity				Importance of activity			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Accept proposals for academic change	3.94	0.81	1	34	4.34	0.70	2	32
Realize the need for contemporary changes	3.59	0.93	2	34	4.52	0.71	1	33
Monitor an efficient approval path through the university's academic planning structure	3.33	1.02	3	33	4.16	0.68	4	32
Manage a realistic timeline for a new program to proceed from planning initiation through to program implementation stage	3.21	0.78	4	33	4.18	0.63	3	34
Take significant programmatic risks	2.68	0.95	5	31	3.53	0.82	5	30
Mean of means *	3.27	0.43	---	---	3.86	0.33	---	---

Notes : 1. The scale for *Current level of assessing criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Considerable extent; 5 = A great deal; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. The scale for *Importance of criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate importance; 4 = Considerable importance; 5 = Great importance; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

3. * Mean of means = mean of responses of vice-presidents (academic) for all of the 39 questionnaire items.

important that this efficiency remain. Further, a VPA wrote on the questionnaire that the university in question has a

> well-addressed process in place for the assessment or questioning and approval of both new and substantially altered programs. It combines the Senate's academic responsibility (including budget priorities), the Board of Governors' approval, and the administration's responsibilities throughout the process through to implementation.

In accord with the above, the question--"Manage a realistic timeline for a new program to proceed from planning initiation through to program implementation stage"--ranked second in *importance* of the activity with a mean of 4.18. However, the VPAs rated the *current activity* related to this question as being third in this table with a mean (3.21) slightly below the mean of means (3.27) for this category within the questionnaire. Moreover, the VPAs were asked on the last page of the questionnaire their opinions as to the length of the approval process. Overall, a mean of two years resulted, with a response range from 18 to 30 months. One VPA added to the returned questionnaire that "academic quality assessments of proposals invariably entail extended timelines for approvals in an 'academocratic' institution." This VPA also commented on the average timeline by stating that it takes "19-24 months if no new government funding is required for implementation (government approval comes quickly if no money is required); 49+ months if new government funding is required." However, another VPA qualified his/her response to this question by stating that the "approval/review process takes far too long; the need for radical change in programming is not accepted."

The last question in Table 4.8 was related to the degree that academic planners "take significant programmatic risks." The mean for current activity (2.68) was well below the mean of means (3.27) in this category. Also the mean for importance (3.53) was below this category's mean of means (3.86.) These two results could be taken that

academics are relatively reluctant to take programmatic risks, a finding which is supported in the literature (e.g., Seymour, 1988.)

Corporate-Higher Education Forum. The members of CHEF were not asked about their perceptions of the activities relevant to acceptance, approval process, and the average timeline, nor did any of them offer any opinions on the matter.

University of Alberta. The University of Alberta professors were asked their opinions as to the details of the planning and approval processes. As previously mentioned, the actual starting point of the process was difficult to identify. However, from the initial stage of department consideration to the approval stage by the GFC the mean time, as calculated from the professors' feedback, was 3.3 years. The range of these responses went from 8 months to 16 years. With these two extremes removed, the mean was 2.7 years.

One individual emphasized that "the process of change at universities is very, very slow. The university does not react and respond well to sort of crises-of-the-moment from an academic point of view, especially when we're talking about a new program point of view." Another person commenting on the collegial and democratic nature of the process stated that "there were a lot of lunch-time forums, open meetings where anyone could come who was interested in just debating issues of the proposal itself, so there was quite a lengthy democratic process within this faculty before this proposal was passed."

A senior academic administrator at the University of Alberta commenting on the slow pace of program approval stated that "I am far more concerned with a meaningless, foolish, immediate response on the part of universities to every grunt in the larger community than I am with the reverse." This sentiment was echoed by several others during the interviews. Another proposed that

> the most critical factor is leadership. If you have a champion, someone who's really driving it, you can move. I'm amazed how it can move so quickly. But often you don't have that and this is always the problem. Is it being pushed in or is it being pulled? Where's it coming from? Where's the force?

Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development

In Alberta, as in the other provinces in Canada, the legislated relationship between universities and the provincial government is outlined and defined by statute, such as in the *Universities Act* (see Alberta, 1992). Further, regulations such as *Principles and policies governing professional legislation in Alberta* (see Alberta, 1990) have been formalized in each province. Universities and external agencies have co-existed quite well under these statutes and regulations. However, friction arises when each stakeholder's jurisdictional boundary is crossed by the other--a boundary which is often difficult to define and is in a state of flux. Separating educational philosophy and direction of universities from political agendas of governments is a complex task. For example, at the time of this study, the Government of Alberta wanted its higher education system to be more responsive in its academic direction (See "Government begins . . . .," 1993).

AAECD has had a regulatory as well as a fiduciary role to play in Alberta's higher education sector which includes "universities, colleges, technical institutes, schools of nursing, provincially administered institutions, further education councils, and consortia" (Alberta Advanced Education, 1989b, p. 3). This section provides information on Specific Research Question 1.7: "What are the current extent and preferred extent of involvement of Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development in program development?"

Role of AAECD as Perceived by Academics

University of Alberta. Participants in the interviews were asked the question " To what extent should Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development

be involved in academic program development within this university?" First, one senior academic administrator at the University gave an impression of the function of AAECD in the following words:

> Without in any way downplaying the importance of ministers of any portfolio, we are really talking about a level of reflection and a level of decision making which doesn't relate all that directly to the Minister. We are talking about a civil service bureaucracy. Sometimes in some jurisdictions the decision is made in the name of the Minister. But over the years my experience is that the ministers differed one from another but none got himself directly involved in the final decision making with regards to particular programs.

Another senior academic administrator offered an additional perspective on the difference between bureaucrats and elected officials: "You can bring bureaucrats on side because they view themselves as professionals and you are often able to get their support."

Views on the role of the AAECD varied among the interviewees. The main theme which pervaded the answers was one of preserving the academic autonomy of universities. Most agreed the Department had a role, but there was an uncertainty as to at what stage in the academic development process AAECD should be involved. One respondent discussed the "questions of autonomy of universities. It would be dangerous to give too many initiatives to government to put their hands into." Another commented that government involvement is at the policy or idea level. He added that if it ever got to the point of being more directive than that, "there's just too much chance for mischief because it would be pretty hard for anybody in AAECD to understand our programs well enough to make concrete proposals about what ought to happen."

Many said AAECD has a "financial watch dog" role to play but not an academic development one. Since higher education is to a large extent paid for by taxpayers, one stated that AAECD is the watchdog of those funds and that "there should be a certain degree of evaluation of what postsecondary institutions want to do, but the government should not necessarily direct what they should do." Another added that universities

"have a responsibility to be accountable to the community through Advanced Education --it is fair to have them scrutinize what we're doing. But my perception for this program [in question] anyway was that Advanced Education left the substance to us."

One individual viewed both sides of AAECD's responsibility in academic program adjudication:

> We accept that the government or the Department has the authority to create universities, to accept the programs. But looking at the reverse, they should have the power to rescind programs on their own initiative. But certainly if I were the government today I would be tempted to look at the system, it is essentially too rich. There are too many institutions for the population. But who else is going to intervene--no institution is going to raise its hand to say, 'Well, I think you should close us down.'

Another professor described a role for the AAECD which was different from its "watch dog" function. Stating that the AAECD has become large and cumbersome, he maintained that

> it really isn't doing what it should be doing. What it should be doing is functioning as a kind of catalyst and sponsoring gatherings of key representatives depending on the issue of the four universities or the three conventional universities, of the colleges, or of the universities and the colleges in a particular geographical area like Edmonton. That would help the representatives of the particular institutions to arrive at a better level of cooperation and coordination.

Others, however, were less supportive of AAECD's role as an affiliate in university academic planning. When asked about this role, one said

> it is very important that Department of Advanced Education be a reactive not a proactive body. I'm wary of any political body or governmental body dictating what should be taught at university, given the very nature of what a university is in itself, which is a body of independent thought that marries a whole bunch of people with different points of view.

This concern regarding AAECD was supported by another who commented that "I get nervous if an agency like this is too proactive."

One professor, when asked the question on AAECD's involvement, replied, with emphasis, "None! Their view is not to say whether this is a good PhD program or not. Their view is to say 'Is this something that's needed and something that public

funds should be expended on?'" This emotive response was supported by another who emphasized that "On the whole I would prefer to see them stay out of it. Academics are smart enough to do it on their own. I can't think of any instances or events that they would have to get involved." Another stressed, "Not at all! The government is the last group that should be involved in academic planning. There are people on campus sensitive to the areas of student interest, the general community."

One professor provided a comment which differed from the opinions of the majority of the others:

> The Department is sensitive to the needs of Albertans as reflected to them through, for example, the education caucus of the provincial government where MLAs would indicate that their constituents had a sense that such and such a need was not being met. It's in that regard that I could quite justifiably see how Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development should be involved. In some instances, they in part become the initiators of program changes.

The formalized program approval process of the government was explained by a senior academic administrator at the University. He described the working of the Alberta Government's Program Coordination Policy:

> First you need to have institutional approval in the sense that you have to advance a program proposal that has a reasonable degree of endorsement within the institution. The [Advanced Education] Department looks at all those proposals taking into account social demand as well as employment prospects and economic considerations and decides whether or not it is prepared to advance money to support that program. Recently, the government has supported new programs particularly in the business area whether it be in colleges or universities but has been less supportive of programs of other sorts that don't appear to have high demand from the point of view of the students and high demand from the point of view of the economy. If someone came up with a Classics program proposal, I doubt if it would get very far.

This quotation emphasized that first identifying, and then responding to society's needs has a strong, value-laden undertone.

However, another senior academic administrator emphasized that although there is an administrative process in place, many of the decisions are political. He

emphasized the point by illustrating that the province of Alberta has two faculties of law but

> The University of Calgary on its own couldn't have decided to have a Faculty of Law. In the final analysis it was a government decision. My perception is that it was a political decision. Three faculties of nursing? Lethbridge didn't want it, and yet it was forced to have the third faculty of nursing and that is a fact.

Many respondents considered that the government's role and input into university academic planning is fulfilled with the appointment of the chair and members to the board of governors by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, as outlined in the *Universities Act* (see Alberta, 1992, p. 13). This is supported by Brubacher (1977) who added that "it is obvious that a lay board of governors performs the important function of representing the public's interest to the university and explaining the viewpoint of these institutions to the public" (p. 32). As one senior academic administrator at the University stated,

> the government appoints the Board chair and certain members to the Board who then are mandated to oversee the university. That allows the government to be independent of the running of the institution. So then the Board hires the president, hires the vice-presidents and all policy flows with this bicameral system--the GFC and the Board. The Board is the government's opportunity to oversee the public interest by appointment to the Board, and their role should go no further than that.

Further, several professors, in discussing the approval process of a university, mentioned, without an obvious sense of distraction or frustration, their acceptance of the important function of the Board of Governors in adjudicating academic program proposals. One individual continued by defining some operational guidelines for a board of governors: "The Board should be independent and autonomous of the government in priority setting, resources allocation, and determination of things like salaries and workloads and so forth."

In summary, a majority of the academics interviewed at the University of Alberta considered that the AAECD has a role to play in determining academic programs

being offered at the province's universities. However, less agreement was obvious about the entry and exit points of the government's interaction with universities.

Summary

The five items which had the highest means for *current level of activity* in the VPAs' responses for this chapter were "Obtain information from faculty members" (mean=4.50), "Proposal has sufficient courses in the major field or discipline" (mean=4.15), "Proposal reflects academic needs of students" (mean=4.09), "Academic planners evaluate faculty expertise needed to implement the proposed program" (mean=3.94), and "Accept proposals for academic change" (mean=3.94). The two items which had the lowest means for *current level of activity* in the VPAs' responses for this chapter were "Obtain information from public at large" (mean=1.94), and "Proposal fits with the priorities and policies of the provincial government" (mean=2.35).

The five items which had the highest means for *importance* in the VPAs' responses for this chapter were "Academic planners assess financial support for initiation of the proposed program" (mean=4.70), "Academic planners assess financial support for continuation of the proposed program" (mean=4.64), "Proposal reflects academic needs of students" (mean=4.62), "Proposal fits with the mission of the university (mean=4.49), and "Academic planners evaluate faculty expertise needed to implement the proposed program" (mean=4.47). The VPAs' items with the lowest *importance* means were "Obtain information from public at large" (mean=2.68) and "Obtain information from provincial government officials" (mean=2.81).

The three items which had the highest means for *current level of activity* in the CHEF members' responses for this chapter were "Consider the workload of faculty members" (mean=4.00), "Assess financial cost of proposed program" (mean=3.69), and "Assess financial support for proposed program" (mean=3.63). The three items

which had the lowest means for *current level of activity* in the CHEF members' responses were "Ensure that the proposal meets the personnel needs of the various businesses, industries, and professions (i.e., it will provide a suitable number of graduates)", (mean=2.24), and "Obtain information from public at large" (mean=2.38).

The three items which had the highest means for *importance* in the CHEF members' responses were "Assess financial support of proposed program" (mean=4.24), "Ensure that proposal meets the students' needs for development of appropriate skills" (mean=4.22), and "Ensure that the proposal meets the curricular needs of the various businesses, industries, and professions (i.e., it will provide specialized skills and knowledge)" (mean=4.17). The three items which had the lowest means for *importance* in the CHEF members' responses were "Obtain information from provincial government officials" (mean=2.67), "Obtain information from professionals in the university's geographic locality" (mean=3.28), and "Obtain information from the public at large" (mean=3.28).

The academic development and approval processes in Canadian universities can best be described as "bottom-up." Other words used to describe the processes are "collegial," "political," and "methodical." For the most part, the program changes pertinent to this study, and consistent with the literature, originated from the level of faculty members and proceeded through to the university board of governors where approval was either received or denied. However, given this simplistic description, the processes are far from uniform when one considers factors such as the initiation of the new program proposal, support for the new proposal, defining and fulfilling of needs for various constituencies, and the varying lengths of the processes.

This chapter described the context within which academic planning and approval occur at a university. Academics regard academic change of being of paramount importance. As supported by the many and varied perceptions presented in this chapter

on the complex issues surrounding university academic renewal, the planning environment is always in a state of flux. Haughey (1994) described this context well in his paper on strategic planning processes throughout a western university: "The willingness to act quickly often conflicts with the norms and decision making structures of the university" (p. 22). He also noted that change in universities depends upon powerful forces and vested interests. Further, Haughey (1994) stated that in universities in particular "centralized decision making is the antithesis of the collegial model and there are considerable risks involved in attempts to change the organization's culture without careful and sensitive consultation with the faculty" (p. 20).

The role of Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development (AAECD) was also discussed in this chapter. The AAECD has several responsibilities. From a governmental perspective, the Department serves as a financial "watch dog," a facilitator or catalyst for higher collaborative forums among the higher education institutions, and a coordinator of the higher education system. According to the comments of the interviewees, however, at the level of each university, AAECD's role is placed into the hands of the institutions' boards of governors. During the interviews, there was unanimous support, but to different extents, for universities having the control over the academic direction of each institution.

CHAPTER 5

RESPONSIVENESS OF UNIVERSITIES

This chapter presents information on the degree of responsiveness of universities in general, and the University of Alberta in particular, relevant to the development and approval of new academic programs and major changes to existing ones. Two major themes, with sub-themes, are reviewed. First, the balance between meeting societal and academic needs is discussed. Second, the perceptions of vice-presidents (academics) of selected Canadian universities, corporate members of CHEF, and some University of Alberta professors on the degree of responsiveness of universities are presented, supported by examples.

Information about some of the items included in the tables in Chapter 4 is also included in Chapter 5 in order to provide comprehensive information relevant to each of the specific research questions addressed in this chapter.

Societal and Academic Needs

Presently, as demonstrated in much of the contemporary literature relating to university academic planning, the overall purpose and degree of responsiveness of universities are being debated by academics, scholars, politicians, professionals, and the public at large. This theme of responsiveness beseeches universities to offer more programs to meet the needs of society and to allow constituents external to the universities to influence program content. Counter to this demand for more input into university content is the claim of the professoriate to be autonomous and to be allowed solely to charter the direction of academic programming (e.g., Cameron, 1990, Benjamin, et al., 1993). The following sections provide information relevant to Specific Research Question 2.1: "What perceptions exist about the extent to which universities are responsive to societal needs as demonstrated by program proposals?"

Role of the University

In a continuous pendular fashion, universities, in defining their roles, have historically changed from having utilitarian goals to goals which were more idealistic, and then back again to more pragmatic purposes (Le Goff, 1980). Understanding what these roles are will assist in determining degrees of responsiveness.

Vice-presidents (academic). The VPAs were not asked specifically and did not provide any information about the role of the university.

Corporate-Higher Education Forum. Although not asked questions directly about the role of the university, three CHEF respondents provided comments on their questionnaires. One wrote that academic planning of universities "should reflect assessments of Canada's needs for future prosperity." Another responded that

> businesses and all types of industries (manufacturing, financial services, etc.) are or will be soon involved in increasing productivity, re-engineering, downsizing, etc. and will have to compete globally. Relocation programs, re-training will take place. Unemployment might be caused by all these mergers, reorganizations, etc. Therefore:
>
> 1. Universities in Canada should not only be aware of that but should help industries by developing adequate programs for retraining and training.
> 2. Universities should themselves reorganize--workloads should increase; evaluation of performance should take place--otherwise the gap between the academic world and business will widen.

The third added that

> the question "react to comments for change from business" and the question "react to comments for change from professionals" are for me key indicators of some of the issues we currently face in Canada. As the world evolves, the competition for brain power is no longer limited to a given province, city or country and therefore we must, as businesses, be focused on the global picture. I suggest that this is also true for universities. As well, you have a role, in my opinion, to help the various levels of government to understand how they can help in growing Canada's economy, exports, R & D, etc. by showing the benefits of certain changes in our education system as witnessed in countries like Taiwan, Singapore, etc. We have been saying over the past few years that we've had a shortage of engineers and technical experts, and we have had a surplus of lawyers and social workers. We must change that around--we must start by influencing the primary school systems, the secondary schools, etc.

These three opinions expressed by the CHEF respondents reflected one view of the role of a modern university--meeting the economic needs of society. Dr. R. Farquhar, President of Carleton University, quoting from plenary sessions held at the eleventh annual meeting of the Corporate-Higher Education Forum in 1993, stated that " 'the primary value that universities are expected to add to the social and economic progress of our country is the development of our human resources through learning' " (Corporate-Higher Education Forum, p. 7).

However, there are three other statements in the second quotation above which are divergent from what academics perceive as their responsibilities and to which they may then take exception. First, this CHEF member used the phrase "developing adequate programs." Mission statements tend to imply that the programs at universities should be on the threshold of futuristic thinking in all disciplines on campus. Second, the phrase "workloads should increase" demonstrates an unfamiliarity with the scope of responsibilities of the professoriate. The Association of Academic Staff: University of Alberta (AAS:UA) in its brochure (1987) on the goals of a University professor described the multifaceted role of the academic staff above and beyond teaching. The brochure stated, in part, that professors

> 1. From time to time accept formal involvement in the administration of the University, as a Department Chair, Dean, President, or other official, even though they realize that such administrative duties involve the personal sacrifice of reduced ability to pursue the teaching and research activities for which they joined the University;
> 2. From time to time accept less formal involvement in the administration of the University, through committee or other work, while trying to ensure that the vigorous pursuit of the professor's primary goals is maintained. (p. 5)

Third, the expression "evaluation of performance should take place" added further evidence of the unfamiliarity with the functions of the professoriate. The AAS:UA brochure (1987) also noted that one goal of professors is to

> respect confidential information gathered about their colleagues in the course of their duties, whether it concerns their academic activities, their personal lives,

> or their opinions and beliefs, and disclose such information only in accordance with *accepted canons of evaluation* and reporting [italics added]. (p. 4)

This comment on evaluation was supported by several of the University's academics who were interviewed for the study.

Although these comments emphasized the importance of higher education relative to skill development, they demonstrated a form of linear thinking (i.e., university training in a field prepares one for a job in that field) that is not necessarily accurate. Elliott, Hirsch, and Puro (1993), citing several authors and using undergraduate business programs as an example, stated that "while graduates are technically proficient, critics have charged that business graduates are unnecessarily narrow and provincial, communicate poorly, and have little experience or skill in functioning in a group setting" (p. 40).

Moreover, many of the recent Alberta provincial government announcements and policy directions for higher education have also been phrased in these economic terms. In an 18 January 1994 news release from Alberta's Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development, sweeping changes to the way the Alberta government provides money to universities, colleges and technical institutes were announced. As stated in the release entitled *Major Changes Announced to the Funding of Public Post-Secondary Institutions*, the Minister proclaimed that the first *guiding principle* for the changes was to "increase the responsiveness of education and training to the needs of individual Albertans and their communities. Priority is given to preparing students to enter the job market."

Two major issues in the debate among internal and external constituencies were reflected in this announcement. First, the universities' top priority, in the view of the provincial government, should be oriented towards the labour market. However, during two days of discussion at the Alberta government's second round of public

consultation on higher education held in May of 1994, many delegates from business, community organizations, and higher education institutions expressed the concern that "the government's draft paper's emphasis on training people for the job market was too heavy" (*Folio*, 13 May 1994, p. 2). For example, the spokesperson for Syncrude Canada stated that "the focus on the province's adult education system should be on educating generalists, and not on training people for specific skills" (p. 2).

The second issue pertained to equating the roles of colleges and technical institutes with universities. In the opinion of one University of Alberta academic, this comparison is illogical:

> We [universities] must never compromise our value system, which is pursuit of knowledge without compromise. But we should not turn into a technical school or a training program or an apprenticeship program. It should always be done in a context of knowledge discovery, and pursuit of new knowledge. And that's what distinguishes universities from community colleges.

Another stated that the "community colleges from day one had a development mandate to serve the community. They were responsible for developing the community in the very broadest sense. Universities have to retain independence in the choice of programs to ensure the sustenance, maintenance, and development of scholarship." However, Dr. P. Davenport, former President of the University of Alberta stated at the aforementioned May 1994 workshop that "we feel the vision statement [from the workshop] is lacking in an important aspect with regard to research. We need to include some reference to research if we are going to describe what our universities do, and probably what our colleges will do in the future."

Further information on government involvement and perceptions on university academic planning is presented in greater detail in Chapter 4.

University of Alberta. During the interviews, University of Alberta personnel offered their perceptions on the roles of the university in today's society. The majority of individuals described the roles in somewhat imprecise, traditional

terms, as the following quotations exemplify--a similar trend has been noted by Brubacher, 1977; Axelrod, 1990; and Cameron, 1990:

> [The University's] aims are to prepare graduates with a sense of responsibility, with abilities to communicate well, to think logically and to solve problems, to work with others who are, as individuals, committed to lifelong learning.
>
> We basically do two things. On one side we have our teaching and on the other side we have our creativity and our research.
>
> We must fulfill the demands of any university which is to create a literate, curious, tolerant society; to help students think critically, to expand their horizons, to understand the context of society or the world.
>
> To act as a window on the world in a general sense.
>
> Universities are not here to train people for jobs--university education is to train people to solve problems.
>
> Universities' fundamental role in society is just to stand back from the area of market, supply/demand, and economy kind of situations. This enables an opportunity for a reflection-critique about where we are going in society, some sense of being in order to get a more total perspective. There are other considerations besides economic perspectives on the whole issue of what is man and what he's becoming and where is he going and why is he going in that direction?

One professor described changing expectations for universities and greater emphasis on productivity and skills in this way:

> It will never be what it used to be, the Ivory Tower of retreat where you could go and think scholarly thoughts and muse and debate and develop philosophy. I'm sorry to see that. Twenty-five years ago when I first got into the University it was a different place. Now there are the pressures of publication, productivity, and teaching more students with fewer staff. The pressures of the extra service and administrative duties that everybody has means that this place is having to respond to the job crunch, to the need to turn people out into society who can make a living rather than just provide them with a liberal education to allow them to enjoy life. I think those days are over and we have to be more accountable to giving students skills. Mind you, I'm speaking for a professional faculty. This has always been our task to train students to be competent and to work ethically and that's not changed for us, but I think the university in general is going to become more and more skills-oriented.

Another respondent discussed the role of universities in today's society from the context that this role changes according to the needs of individuals. The need to conduct applied research and develop skills was first discussed:

> I would see the university as having an overall mission to meet a considerable component of society's needs. Now the question is how far do you take the notion of academic needs of society--does society need everyone to be trained in academic endeavors? A university with perhaps somewhat selective higher education can definitely help society. There are times when society says we want people with specific advanced training. The university can certainly help in that respect. Society, in my opinion, is quite prepared to accept the results of something like research in electronics, or computer technology. They almost take it for granted. So the research side of university usually has medium to long-term payoffs for society.

This person then continued to describe other roles of a university:

> The university should always bear in mind that society wants and expects experts in various fields and not just in the sciences and engineering. As the level of education goes up in the whole of society then I would argue that society would become more receptive to things like music, art, and theater. So I see that as also part of the university's function--to maintain continuing exploration of the arts as well as simply getting on with research in the basic sciences and engineering. There's no doubt that in today's 21st century that's what the consumer seeks.

Another professor identified the role of universities by describing the characteristics of the institutions' graduates:

> We know that in today's world, graduates of universities will probably have four or five different jobs in their lives. So how can you possibly prepare them down to the minute detail for the particular job that they're doing when you know that they're going to be changing jobs? So 10 years from now we should be asking employees and graduates how well prepared were they to be flexible and responsive, to be able to think on their feet with decision making. The interesting thing is that companies come in and say, 'we don't want you to train students. We want you to educate them. We want someone who can think, who can write clearly, who can speak clearly, who can be adaptive, who can be flexible, who understands culture, who understands the world, who can speak a different language.'

This latter opinion of the role of universities was supported by Dr. K. Ogilvie, President of Acadia University, who commented that a university education provides an individual with "knowledge and the ability to learn, to solve problems, and to be trained and retrained for a lifetime. . . . It also helps equip an individual with the ability and desire to distinguish quality, whether in a product or in an argument" (*In House*, 1994, p. 1).

Finally, a senior academic administrator at the University emphasized that the university "must not become simply an agent of government." This sentiment was supported by another professor who stated that

> I certainly don't think that the university should have as a priority to meet the needs of the economy. That does not mean that we don't have to be responsive to what's happening in society or to meeting the needs. But I certainly don't see ourselves becoming a service institution where government will dictate.

Therefore, as shown by the participants in this study's interviews, describing the purpose of universities is not easy. One of the difficulties in defining the role of universities is the "multiversity" nature (Lowen, 1991; Hanson and Raney, 1993) of its academic program offerings. The word "university" is derived from the Latin word *universus* meaning aggregate or whole (*The World Book Dictionary*, 1974, p. 2271)--in reference to this study, the whole range of knowledge. The term initially described well the role of the university as being a centre for the generation and dissemination of collective wisdom. But the role and character of the university has increased in complexity such that today no one definition can fully describe its purposes and functions.

Moreover, this composite character of universities is not a recent phenomenon. Le Goff (1980) discussed the evolution of the social classes and norms in the Middle Ages and described the "diversity of the universities themselves and their internal contradictions" (p. 135). He presented the different ways that universities were perceived from the twelfth to mid-fifteenth centuries. During this era, universities were seen as "corporations," as "centres of professional training," as an "economic group of consumers," as a "sociodemographic group," as "prestigious bodies," and as a "social milieu" (pp. 135-147).

This complexity can lead to difficulties. In a general sense, these multiversities, or "comprehensive universities," offer programs in three broad areas or domains--the

arts, the sciences, and the professional schools. Faculty members in each area have their own collective and individual academic values, standards, and norms which allow the domains to develop intellectually as separate entities. Burrell and Morgan (1979) affirmed this description by stating that rather than viewing organizations, of which universities are examples, as "rational, purposive, goal-seeking, adaptive enterprises coping with the demands of an environment, [they should be seen] as pluralistic, or constituting multifaceted coalitions of individual and group goals" (p. 220). A senior academic administrator at the University described this complexity by commenting that

> I can go right across the road into the humanities building and hear things that you think, 'Wow,' and then I can walk over to the physics building and hear the absolute opposite. It is as if they are in two different worlds, whether it is perceptions, objectives, themes, or philosophies.

The independent growth within these domains has its advantages and disadvantages. The major advantage is academic autonomy, while the main disadvantage relates to the difficulties associated with lack of coordination or cohesion of the planning process. During the interviews, this view was advanced:

> Faculties tend to put something in, to add another layer and so forth. What we end up being is a conglomeration of such things that the problem is not the lack of responsiveness. Rather, we end up being incoherent--it doesn't hold together anymore because we just add on and never take anything out or really think of putting it together with some cohesion.

This latter comment on complexity was supported by a senior administrator at the University who added that "the interesting thing is I don't know the way that programs are [voluntarily] decommissioned."

With this "conglomeration" comes a communal sense of existence as stated by one professor who said that "in terms of community needs, I think the problem that the University of Alberta has had is it is so large that it becomes its own community of communities. The problem is that it becomes more difficult to see past the overall university communities into the broader community. I think that's a bit of a price that

largely results from being their own community." Thus it can be said that the degree of responsiveness can be adversely affected by balkanization within the university.

Perceptions of Responsiveness

University responsiveness is a topic currently being debated by the many constituents associated with higher education in Alberta, in other provinces, and throughout the world. Complex discussions and evolving perspectives have created polarization of views on the quality of university academic programming. Individuals both internal and external to universities are claiming that much of the program content is inappropriate to today's society. Others, again both internal and external to universities, claim that universities are offering what society needs for the immediate and long-term future. This section provides further information on Specific Research Question 2.1: "What perceptions exist about the extent to which universities are responsive to societal needs as demonstrated by program proposals?" The perceptions of responsiveness presented are from the perspective of academics from the University of Alberta.

Perceptions by University of Alberta Academics

When asked this aforementioned question, one of the professors related a perception of what responsiveness means to him. His comments summarized the inconsistency in comprehending the term "responsiveness":

> We often don't understand that the term means different things to different people. When the university talks about being responsive, I think on many different levels. Am I being responsive to the needs of my staff members? Am I being responsive to the needs of the profession that is wanting this program? We are talking about many levels of responsiveness. With the government, their understanding of responsiveness might be, 'How fast can you put this out? Does it answer a specified need in the economy that we're looking at?' Those are two different things. They might not always be contradictory. They might be complementary but we're not meaning the same thing. We are using the terms differently and that confuses the issue.

Another described a "hidden-agenda" use of the term "responsiveness" by stating that "when money is tight, people, to rationalize the cuts, say that we are no longer responsive. So I think it's a bit rhetorical; it seems an easy way to approach the topic." This individual continued by demonstrating the difficulty in defining exact terms of reference for "responsiveness":

> We can always be more responsive just like any other service--at least in theory --to the customers' tastes or desires or needs of society. In practice the problem is identifying with some precision what the needs are. So when you say we should be responsive to their needs then you say, 'OK, what are their needs and who is going to establish that?' That is very difficult. Is government going to do it? Governments that have tried have failed.

Further, he discussed how the Swedish government failed when it attempted to establish, in three- or five-year terms, the future educational needs of its citizens. This professor concluded by suggesting that one way to be responsive in meeting the needs of society is by looking at the employment and income of university graduates:

> Overall, when you're thinking of the average over the next five years, most of them find employment and most of them seem to be at a slightly or considerably higher income bracket than say secondary school graduates. So from that point of view, there doesn't seem to be such a waste of our system--it is being responsive.

A senior academic administrator commented that placing the term "responsiveness" in a context is often difficult and can have deleterious results if the setting is misunderstood. This individual stated that if the provincial government officials

> mean that unless we were more responsive they would allocate fewer resources and maybe even no resources at all to a particular program of the university because 'who's interested in it?,' then they lose me completely. I have to admit that I am confused as to what is meant when the point is made that institutions aren't responsive.

Notwithstanding the inconsistency in understanding the term, the majority of interviewees felt that the University has been quite responsive over the years and gave examples to support their opinions, albeit with qualification in some instances: "From

the perspective of the university, we do the best we can. From the perspective of the community, we are slow, we are out of touch and it is too laborious for us to move on stream."

Another, from a professional program, stated that "We actually feel during the last five years when we're doing all this program change that we've been very responsive to public need in terms of the *upgrading* program." Another educator in the professions added that "we have to be more responsive for our own survival." A third person from the professions supported this comment on the University's responsiveness by stating that "you've got to be responsive to meet the demands out there. . . . I've given you examples where I think by being responsive, the needs of the employers are indeed taken into account and our program has continued to grow." Finally, a fourth person from the professions identified the differences among academic units in relation to responsiveness and commented that

> being a professional faculty we are much more connected on that issue of being responsive than other departments in the university. The university is a place of academic excellence and scholarly thought, but being a professional faculty we are involved in meeting the public need and we do that in a scholarly way, but we are meeting a public need.

One professor suggested that being responsive does not necessarily mean an increase in the success of the graduates. He reported on the comments from visitors external to the University who were looking at a particular program for review purposes, and stated that "We asked them what they wanted of us regarding program changes and they said, 'We don't particularly want anything, you're doing a good job, we just don't have any jobs for your students'. "

An interview respondent provided an historical view of the responsiveness of universities to community needs:

> If not forever, certainly for the longest time, universities have been sensitive to the needs of the larger community. McGill had a faculty of medicine long

> before a faculty of arts and science. So obviously way back, it was responding to a need for professionals.

Le Goff (1980) supported this historical responsiveness by noting a major contrast in purpose during the twelfth and sixteenth centuries between the universities created by public authorities and the evolution of those which were "spontaneously born" (p. 137) out of perceived practical or ideological needs.

During the interviews, the majority of academics who were questioned about a specific program addition at the University qualified their comments about being responsive along these lines: "I can't speak for the university in general. I think our Faculty tries to be responsive"; and "I can't speak for other parts of the University but in the Department of _____ we are very responsive." One respondent summarized the perceptions of other interviewees by stating that "it is hard for me to discuss in terms of other departments. It varies considerably by department. There are some extremely good departments here, but like a profile in any university, you'll find weaker units and stronger units." Thus, without taking a risk by speaking on behalf of the university as a whole, the interviewees felt independently that their unit or department had been responsive.

However, three academics who were interviewed felt the University was not being as responsive as it could be. One stated that "Most people would agree that probably the universities, in general, have not been as responsive as they should have been in the past. Certainly there's room for improvement." Another added: "I don't think they're very responsive. The unresponsiveness goes up exponentially with the size of the university. It is probably worse in a public university than a private university in terms of rapid decision making." The third related that "they should be responsive but the general view is that they are not doing very well in this regard." Of note here is that the first two opinions on the non-responsiveness of universities came

from two of the three professors from the disciplines (as compared to 14 from the professional schools--see Table 3.1).

Several individuals commented on their concerns about being too responsive. One stated that

> the reason we have so many screwed-up programs with endless requirements and layers upon layers of courses and so forth is because we try to be responsive. Every time somebody out there says, 'Gee, we need something to deal with this problem X,' faculties tend to accommodate.

Another added that

> there is a need to seek more and more input. But in the early and the middle 80s, I became very concerned as universities were moving in the direction of developing projects at many of the large research-oriented universities--projects with entities in the larger community, sometimes government, sometimes private industry. As we were fostering more and more activity at the developmental, indeed the industrial end of the research-development continuum, I was getting more and more worried that we were falling into a trap and responding to every request that was received. I fault the university community, not the business community, to be specific.

Academics' Opinions on How They Are Perceived

How the University academics perceive the manner by which external stakeholders view them added an interesting perspective on the question of responsiveness. Based on the interviews, the overall impressions were that academics are aware of the external concerns of nonresponsiveness, but also that this awareness has stimulated their reaction that faculty members are often misunderstood.

One professor commented that after meeting with representatives from business and industry "some industries will say, we are doing a very good job; others will say we are doing a terrible job." Further, this individual added that "if you ask students, some students will be very satisfied and say that we are doing a really good job and others will say what I've learned is totally irrelevant." Another responded that

> if the people of Edmonton knew what was going on at the University I think they would be very happy. I don't detect any hostility towards the U of A, in general, in the city of Edmonton. But I do detect a tremendous lack of

> understanding about what goes on in the university, what the university is trying to do.

One respondent felt that the "the public knows more about the university, if not better understanding it, and one of the things that has made the university better known is simply increased access."

Finally, another offered some impressions on how individuals in Alberta's provincial government may perceive academics and the university experience:

> The present provincial government members in particular, perhaps because they are not aware of what a university is doing, have very little sympathy for universities. They just don't understand because a considerable number don't have university education and have never been exposed to university education. They have made their way in life with successful farming and business ventures and that is fine. So they automatically assume that, 'Well, I got where I am without university education so what is the point in educating 30,000 students at the U of A and another 17,000 at the University of Calgary?'

This professor continued by providing his perception of the public opinion of academics:

> I know to the man in the street that seems like a very cushy job but again it boils down to what does society expect? I do believe that people at the University are trying in the end to improve the quality of life for the whole population of the city, province, and country. You won't do that unless you have institutions like universities, research institutions of various disciplines.

Examples of the University of Alberta's Responsiveness

Throughout the interviews, many examples were offered on how universities in general and the University of Alberta in particular have been responsive. What became obvious was the range of ways that a higher education institution can adapt to meet needs of its students, business and industry, and the public at large.

The new academic programs reviewed for this study had one common theme throughout--there was input from external constituents during the program's formulation stage and beyond for each of them. One of the reasons why the external input was so considerable was because the majority of these programs (14 out of 17)

were professionally based and thus must respond to a defined external constituency, usually the specific professional association.

To enhance this internal-external interaction, one recent strategy at the University has been to set up formal liaison groups between University personnel and the professions. One senior academic administrator commented that "we are trying to respond to professional or outside needs. One way is that we have set up visiting committees and now eight Faculties have those committees." In fact, as outlined in the 30 September 1994 of *Folio* (see Robb, 1994c), the University has continued with its high degree of responsiveness by announcing a plethora of internships and new degree programs in the Faculty of Science "designed to meet employers' needs and bolster Faculty of Science graduates' job prospects" (p. 1). It was further announced in this article that three of the new programs had been developed conjointly with the Faculty of Business and two with the Faculty of Medicine.

Whether called a "visiting committee," "advisory group," or similar name, this practice has gathered favor with both the faculty members and the particular external groups: "In the development stage we had an industrial advisory committee. So one of the first things we did after conceptualizing the new program was to bounce this off that committee, before even prototyping it with the students."

Remarks from another professor interviewed for the study provided insight into the rationale for the visiting practice and was representative of the comments of many of the interviewees:

> The Visiting Committee has been very effective in setting up a formal line of communication with people in the community. Two-thirds of the people who were on our Visiting Committee last year were asked to come back again, so there was some continuity but also a few new faces. The idea has certainly grown on us--the rapport that we had established last year was there again this year. The feedback we get from the Visiting Committee is that it is a very effective way to introduce people from a fairly sensible and broad cross-section of the external community to what we do here.

This professor continued with examples of what these committees discuss in assisting the academics and the external interests to improve understanding and content:

> Last year we dealt with research productivity and the tug-of-war for professors --the things they are obligated to do, how that adversely affects research productivity, and are we meeting our teaching commitments and doing them well? This year we focused on graduate education, trying to explain how graduate education worked, and the pluses and minuses associated with it and what we could be doing differently and better.

Other, more compelling reasons why such a committee is needed were also mentioned:

> We have a responsibility to be accountable to the community through higher education. So in that regard, it is fair to have them scrutinize what we are doing. We are interested in the payoff basically for the community, for students, potential students, and former students in this area. It is very important for us to have people who can see the good and the bad of both of those communities and work to break down some of the barriers that exist, the misconceptions that may be there.

Moreover, the professional programs have not been the only ones to respond to the outside communities. This quotation from a professor interviewed from the Faculty of Science demonstrated how liaison committees function: "We have tours of labs and discuss specific topics and also discuss the kinds of questions that you are asking, 'How might our programs serve the outside community better?' for example." In support of this increasing practice of external input, a senior academic administrator at the University stated that "Out of the 20 people that were on the Visiting Committee of Science, probably 17 of them were from industry. The Faculty of Science is saying, 'We are interested in what your needs are. Tell us and we will see if we can begin to respond'."

One of the effects of these committees has been changes, occurring at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, in the academic programming of many of the University's offerings. This reflects a degree of responsiveness. A professor from Science stated that the new program in question "was an idea that's been around since I

got here--that we ought to have an undergraduate program that was a bit broader than what we have at the moment."

Another, speaking about a graduate-level program addition, stated:

> One thing that has happened at the University of Alberta over the last few years is growth in the number of course-based master's programs, as opposed to thesis-based, mainly in the professional faculties. You might have people who graduated maybe 12-15 years ago. So in the meantime there have been advances in techniques. So these people simply want a chance to come back and upgrade and get a fresh start with state-of-the-art techniques.

Along with programs such as course-based master's degrees, other innovative options have been developed at the University. One increasingly common alternative to the standard program presentation has been the development of interdisciplinary courses: "There are going to be things that you can do that are interdisciplinary that are responsive to society's needs." Another option is through extension or special sessions courses: "One of the ways the University uses to try to be responsive would be not so much through the introduction of new programs but through the provision of special courses which can be put on through our Special Sessions office"; and "To illustrate the point, a part of our education system which is, by definition quite responsive, is the area of continuing education."

One professor discussed how a department modified its course structure, went through the approval processes--"all the hassles"--of the University for ratification eventually by the GFC to allow two students to each obtain a combined master's and PhD degree in two similar content areas. However, he added, that "The program was set up to deal with a couple of specific cases. It has not been generalized and it hasn't been used since those specific cases."

The University has demonstrated its responsiveness by additional means. For example it has established 40 research institutes and uses its faculty members to generate, find, and disseminate expert opinions for all areas of society:

> We have a speakers' network--your community, your fraternal organization, your business association, want insights into any of a number of topics. 'Who should we talk to?' We can bring in international experts on short notice to talk to you. The University at large encourages its faculties to be seen to be active and responsive in that regard.

Another replied that

> we owe to the society we are in to be responding. We are part of that society to help solve problems which are very complex. What are they? Poverty, illiteracy, waste management, environment, global warming, all of that. Well, as a country and as a world we are getting serious about those problems. But how do we solve them? We don't have Departments of Illiteracy. So we have to figure out a way to bring the brightest minds together with the people out there and work collaboratively.

As another example of being responsive, the University has received input from external stakeholders on many of its functions such as major appointments within its administrative structure:

> There's been more and more of an effort to give industry, professional associations and groups some sort of voice. They don't always have a vote but do have a voice on the selection of our leaders [e.g., deans], and that is going to make a difference. You know the days of us just doing our own thing are fast coming to a close. The trick is figuring out how to interface.

Also, another stated that "Most faculties, for a little while now, have had at least one person--the labels may change from one faculty to another--but at least one person who has, maybe not as the sole responsibility, but as a primary responsibility, the external world."

Further comments regarding external input were expressed by many of the interview participants who talked about the University Senate and its recent trend to hold meetings off-campus:

> Senate meetings are held in various communities in the province.
>
> The Senate here is a little different from most universities. The Senate here is very oriented with public relations.
>
> The Senate goes out of its way at times with having meetings off campus.

> We are moving in the right direction with our Senate being more effective and it is the bridge with the larger community.
>
> The University has done a number of things: for example, the Senate has met at different places around the province and has invited local groups to make some issues.

Another way by which the University and its various departments have displayed responsiveness is through its internal review processes of academic programs and faculty performance. One interviewee commented on the requirement for a major, periodic review of a program:

> We are required to review the program five years after its initial implementation because evaluation procedures have to be written into the proposal. And the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research has the regulations that we followed and had to approve the composition of the evaluation team that we suggested would be appropriate.

A second discussed the previous practice at the University for all units on campus to be reviewed:

> We've had a PACCR review, that's the President's Advisory Committee on Campus Reviews. That took us two years to prepare. It is a long, and can be quite painful, process. We had been preparing for a year. We went into discussions and what I did was to step down from the Chair for that time and we brought in someone from outside the department to act as chair for the meetings. That was a very good way of doing it. We let down our hair, we had retreats. The PACCR report came out and the committee to design the new program came in: we had _____ as an external member and _____ who was then Dean of _____ at _____ at that point, was the other external examiner, along with internal-related examiner and an internal non-related department examiner. They spent a year with the Department in responding to the PACCR report.

Another added comments on program review on an on-going basis:

> At the end of each term the curriculum committee holds a feedback session, invites faculty who taught at all sites in all the courses to come and they discuss the various courses with each other--what they did at this site, what they did here, what they did there, what were the problems, what was good, and so forth.

Another commented that

> we are in a continuous state of self examination. The _____ Division of this Department meets to discuss matters, not only with regard to students but with regard to policy, every other week at 8:00 in the morning for an hour. The end-of-term meetings in April and May are numerous. In these meetings, policy is debated, and sometimes we'll have a retreat to consider the program which is perpetually looking at itself.

With respect to performance of the faculty, this individual described the annual review process of faculty members:

> We [as faculty members] are scrutinized a lot. I was on the Faculty Salaries and Promotion Committee--400 people are judged in the Faculty of Arts. With 29 departments you have 29 chairs, 10 elected faculty as well as the associate deans and the dean on that committee, and they meet for a week to look at 400 careers. I was amazed. As adjudicators, you are really on the line--the Chair presenting the proposals for merit and the committee examining the material, the annual reports, how fair it was, how much justice was done, how tough it was. What was enlightening was the overwhelming number of faculty who are so active.

The aforementioned examples have demonstrated the degree and number of ways the University of Alberta has been responsive, as seen through the eyes of its academics.

External Agencies as Advocates of Academic Change

The relationships between universities and their external constituencies have fluctuated over the years to be sometimes at arm's length and other times much more intimate. These changes in the relations of universities with external agencies have resulted from universities shifting with, and at times guiding, the social norms throughout history. For example, Le Goff (1980) noted that during the Middle Ages universities were considered "keepers and guardians of orthodoxy and . . . ideological police in the services of the political powers . . . rather than centers of interested scientific and intellectual work" (p. 148). Conversely, Wagoner and Kellams (1992) noted how universities "stimulated new currents of intellectual life in a world fitfully stirring out of the stupor of medieval slumber" (p. 1675). An understanding of the

current relationships among universities with businesses and other external agencies will assist in determining the extent to which universities are responsive.

This section examines some of the factors to be considered when external agencies are advocating more input into the academic content at universities. Also, information on how external agencies can initiate change is presented. The information addresses the Specific Research Question 2.2: "What are the current extent and preferred extent of involvement of external agencies in advocating program development?"

Factors for Change: Professional and Business Demands

Vice-presidents (academic). Of all the items in Table 5.1, the only one which had a mean above the mean of means (3.27) for the category of *current activity* was "program meets the curricular needs of the various professions (i.e., provides specialized skills and knowledge)" (mean=3.76). There were no items above the mean of means (3.86) for *importance*. On first observation, this suggested that according to the VPAs, consulting with professions and business may be of secondary importance which contradicted the information offered in interviews with University of Alberta faculty members. Upon closer inspection, the relatively large standard deviations for each item in both categories may help to explain this divergent view among the VPAs.

The comments on some VPA questionnaires added further insight into the input of professions and businesses on academic planning. One VPA wrote that "professions, via accreditation powers, probably exert more influence on curriculum design than do employers [business]--probably a good thing!" Another added that

> all programs in our province are vetted by a governmental advisory body that deals with the issues you raise regarding cost, relevance, etc. On some program changes there is a great deal of articulation, e.g., lawyers and the law school, nurses and nursing programs, etc.--on others such as arts and science, there is less external input.

Table 5.1

Means of Responses of Vice-Presidents (Academic) on the Extent to Which Academic Planners Assess That Various Needs of Businesses and the Professions Are Ensured by New Program Proposals and the Importance of This Activity in Program Development

Activity of academic planners	Current level of activity				Importance of activity			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Ensure that program meets the curricular needs of the various professions (i.e., provides specialized skills and knowledge)	3.76	0.83	1	33	3.78	1.04	1	32
Ensure that program meets the employment needs of the various professions (i.e., provides a suitable number of graduates)	3.03	0.97	2	32	3.42	0.87	2	33
Ensure that program meets the curricular needs of the various businesses and industries (i.e., provides specialized skills and knowledge)	2.94	1.06	3	33	3.31	0.97	3	32
Ensure that program meets the employment needs of the various businesses and industries (i.e., provides a suitable number of graduates)	2.61	1.03	4	33	3.16	0.88	4	32
Mean of means *	3.27	0.43	---	---	3.86	0.33	---	---

Notes : 1. The scale for *Current level of assessing criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Considerable extent; 5 = A great deal; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. The scale for *Importance of criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate importance; 4 = Considerable importance; 5 = Great importance; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

3. * Mean of means = mean of responses of vice-presidents (academic) for all of the 39 questionnaire items.

With respect to consulting with businesses in the local community near the university, one VPA wrote that

> the needs of business/employers and the bias/hobby horses of government officials are too transitory, short-lived, and, in the case of the latter [government officials], too often ill-informed, to provide a firm basis for academic planning and program design. Universities simply cannot change as fast or as often as the "market" changes--nor should they!!

Two VPAs expressed, in business-like terms, their opinions of communicating with external agencies on academic planning matters. The first cautioned about the need for "a balance between having a responsive outlook and the dangers of prediction." The second was more specific and added that "this University is very skeptical about the use of market surveys for this purpose [meeting employment needs of business] on the grounds of both accuracy of available information and its timeliness."

Corporate-Higher Education Forum. Table 5.2 displays the responses of the CHEF members on the extent to which academic planners accommodate various needs and consider input from professions and businesses. The items on this table asked for the same information as did the items in Table 5.1. However, four items in Table 5.1 were combined into two in Table 5.2. The items pertaining to meeting business and profession needs (curricular and personnel) were separated in the VPAs' questionnaire, but combined for succinctness in the CHEF questionnaire. In Table 5.2, the scores for both items under *current activity* were below the mean of means (2.98) for the category. Of note, however, is that meeting the curricular needs (mean=4.17) and personnel needs (mean=3.78) of businesses and industries were above the mean of means (3.69) for the *importance* category. This suggests that the CHEF respondents perceived that the universities should be relating better to business and professions when academic programs are being considered.

University of Alberta. A theme which evolved throughout the interviews was the increasing need for academics to listen--not necessarily respond automatically--

Table 5.2

Means of Responses of CHEF Representatives on the Extent to Which Academic Planners Assess That Various Needs of Businesses and the Professions Are Ensured by New Program Proposals and the Importance of This Activity in Program Development

Activity of academic planners	Current level of activity				Importance of activity			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Ensure that the program meets the curricular needs of the various businesses, industries, and professions (i.e., it will provide specialized skills and knowledge)	2.71	0.69	1	17	4.17	0.62	1	18
Ensure that the program meets the personnel needs of the various businesses, industries, and professions (i.e., it will provide a suitable number of graduates)	2.24	0.44	2	17	3.78	0.73	2	18
Mean of means *	2.98	0.38	---	---	3.69	0.34	---	---

Notes : 1. The scale for *Current level of assessing criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Considerable extent; 5 = A great deal; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. The scale for *Importance of criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate importance; 4 = Considerable importance; 5 = Great importance; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

3. * Mean of means = mean of responses of CHEF members for all 18 questionnaire items

but at least listen to external agencies whether they be government, business, or professions. The degree that academics listen could be considered a measure of responsiveness. In fact, as stated previously in this chapter, this necessity to listen has increased because society has generally become more suspicious of public institutions and is quite willing to believe any criticism about these institutions. Because of these suspicions, groups in society are increasing their inclination to bring to account traditional institutions such as government and the church over differences in opinion on issues ranging from performance of duties to ideological disagreements.

As shown in Table 3.1, 14 of the 17 individuals who were interviewed for this study were in professional faculties at the University of Alberta. The common thread which pervaded each of these 14 interviews was a formalized liaison with, and therefore acceptance of, the professional association connected to the specific program of study. This tendency towards the university-professions alliance has historical precedent as described by Axelrod (1990) who discussed the making of a Canadian middle-class in the first third of the 20th century: "Traditionally, scholars have portrayed the emergence of professionalism as an organized and efficient process through which specialized talent was provided to consumers in a complex, industrial society" (p. 65).

Out of these liaisons come several issues ranging from philosophical directions to accreditation standards. One interviewee, discussing the external impetus for the development of a master's program in a profession, commented that

> we were really the last program in Canada that still operated primarily with an undergraduate program. So when this regulation was passed by the Canadian professional association, that gave us the leverage to proceed with a proposal to eliminate the baccalaureate degree and concurrently implement a master's level program.

One respondent from a different profession added that

> the overall impetus was that the _____ association across the country had agreed that by the year 2000, the preparation as a _____ would be through a baccalaureate degree. What finally got us together was the big picture of this baccalaureate for all in the year 2000 and then finding some local initiative.

If not the initiators of the specific university program proposals, the professional associations have often provided the necessary support. An example of the University collaborating with a profession was described in this way:

> We [faculty members] were a major impetus for development of the master's program because as a Faculty we wanted to work with students at the master's level and were able to have the opportunity for ourselves to have some degree of professional growth at that stage. The professional association and practitioners themselves were also a major impetus to help us move in that direction particularly to the master's level. The professional association gave letters of support when asked, along with the professionals. So I would say certainly the professionals and faculty members provided the impetus for the new program.

Role of Business as Perceived By Academics

In modern society, a comparison is not uncommon of universities with other institutions such as business, emphasizing the latter's structures, functions, ideals, and administrative practices. Much of the comparison describes all institutions as having the same or similar goals, operational procedures, and timelines for policy development and implementation, among other attributes. However, Haughey (1994) demonstrated the nature of the institutional differences between universities and business by describing universities "not as goal-directed organizations but as elaborate and complex social systems where meaning is constantly constructed and deconstructed by participants whose loyalty to the enterprise itself is secondary to the loyalty to their own discipline" (p. 9).

To define universities and business with the same terminology, in Ziegler's (1993) opinion, results in confusion and injustice for both organizations. Haughey (1994) presented an example of how academics view this comparison:

> Corporate decision-making styles by presidents, boards of governors and senior administrators of Canadian universities at least, sit uneasily with many faculty members. Those who pursue this style of planning and decision making need to recognize the risks inherent in its precipitous application to an essentially collegial culture relatively unprepared for far-reaching, though perhaps necessary, structural change. (p. 23)

Elliott et al. (1993) supported this sense of uneasiness by adding that "university faculty bristle at analogies between academia and manufacturing. Universities do not and should not produce graduates in the same fashion as automobile factories produce cars" (p. 44). They continued by stating ways in which these two institutions are similar: "Yet, both automobile makers and universities are hampered by vertical organizational structures, strong departmental or disciplinary loyalties, and parochial reward systems" (pp. 44-45). Finally, Brubacher (1977), who contrasted the roles of the board of governors of a university as compared to the board of an industrial enterprise, said that "the role of the latter is to earn profits for their stockholders; that of the former is to advance and enhance the purpose of scholars . . . [and] it is impossible to compute the value of scholars the same way one does industrial or commercial personnel" (pp. 32-33). The following sections examine comments from the CHEF members and University of Alberta academics on this comparison of university with business, and add further information on the degree of perceived responsiveness, or lack of responsiveness, of universities.

Corporate-Higher Education Forum. The CHEF respondents were not asked specifically about the comparison of business with universities. However, as discussed in this chapter in the section on the role of the university, some respondents wrote, in business terminology, on matters raised in the questionnaire about that role. Through written comments, several of the CHEF respondents, in their understanding of university academic planning, equated the complex nature of a university with that

of a large corporation. Ell (1988) identified the tendency to equate the two institutions. He observed that

> the vocabulary of higher education has taken of late what might be termed a pathological orientation. Its lexicon of every day use has come to include such words as 'austerity', 'constraint', 'contraction', 'cutbacks', 'decline', 'downsizing', financial stringency', 'restraint', and 'retrenchment.' All these words possess a decidedly pejorative connotation. (p. 1)

Moreover, as suggested by Seymour (1988), this comparison of universities with business is not necessarily valid:

> The environments for innovation in the corporate world and in higher education are reversed. In a large corporation, if you have a good idea, you don't worry about money. Someone somewhere in the organization will fund it--the idea will find the money. In higher education, however, flexible sources of funding are much more limited. Fewer guarantees exist that someone will recognize the proposal as worthy of an investment. Consequently, the scenario may be reversed--the money will find ideas. (pp. 90-92)

Also, Brubacher (1990) added that "the academic system must not become a mere business enterprise, just a system for producing diplomas and knowledge" (p. 27). Indeed, he noted that if universities were to operate as businesses, society as a whole would be adversely affected.

University of Alberta. One of the reasons why universities are not considered by some people to be responsive relates to this comparison of university with business. All the interview participants were troubled at the tendency for people external to the university to consider that one should function as the other (i.e., that university should be as *efficient* as business). One commented on this temptation to consider the goals of business as being equivalent to the goals for education. He said that he becomes

> quite concerned when I hear people suggest that business should play the major role in deciding what our programs are because I see the goals of business being quite different from the goals of society generally and the goals of education. The goals of business being basically profit, and the way in which that profit relates to the good life is, in my view, questionable. So I hope there is not a significant push in Alberta to make business a dominant participant in the policy

> arena of education. They should have a voice in the policy arena, but we have more to do than create or generate people [graduates] that can help business make more money.

He also stated that "whenever you bring people from different organizations together you have to get to understand each other's organizations," thereby emphasizing that universities are different from other organizational institutions.

Another was more emphatic when the comparison of business with university was discussed, and asserted that

> what has become very clear to me in this job [senior academic administration] is that there is no company that is as diverse and as complex and covers the scope of activities that we cover. No company is turning out people who are archaeologists and electrical engineers and physicians and nurses and agriculture specialists and soil scientists and philosophers and religious educators. I mean nobody, nobody, has got that whole spectrum of things and everything that goes with it--the different cultures, the different perspectives. No company is creating widgets in one area and ideas in another area. Consequently, the mechanisms we have are unique. That's not to say they can't change and I think we're going to have to change some of the ways we conduct our affairs and the ways we decide things. Sometimes it is very inefficient. But I think people fail to recognize the differences between business and university until they're really in it and I don't even think some people in the university realize them.

The difference between these "unique mechanisms" for operational style and businesses was highlighted by Haughey (1994) who stated that "in universities the normal line-staff relationship is reversed with the faculty members claiming pre-eminence on grounds of their professional expertise, and the administrative (managerial) sector is often disparaged because of its alleged lack of commitment to a discipline" (p. 8). Thus, to expect universities to be as efficient and responsive as business demonstrates a lack of appreciation for the complex nature and unique operating styles of universities.

Impetus From External Agencies for Academic Change

As discussed previously, external agencies, especially professions, are advocating academic changes at universities. If an external agency wished to promote a change in academic content at a university, what are some of the strategies that would

have to be used to achieve success? This section explores some rationales and methods used by successful program advocates and refers again to Specific Research Question 2.2: "What are the current extent and preferred extent of involvement of external agencies in advocating program development?"

Vice-presidents (academic). Table 5.3 displays the means of responses of the VPAs on the question of reacting, during their program development and approval processes, to six different groups, two of which are internal--faculty and students--and the other four being external to the university--professionals, business personnel, government officials, and the public-at-large. This table replicates Table 4.1 but the information is presented again here first for convenience but second from a different focus. The information from Table 4.1 was discussed from the procedural aspect of developing and approving program proposals. The data in Table 5.3 is represented from the context of responsiveness.

Information in the Table 5.3 demonstrates that the greatest degree of *current activity* and of *importance* involved consideration of input from faculty and students, in that order. From the means for each of the four external groups, the professionals and business personnel were listed 3 and 4, followed in order by the government officials and public-at-large. The fact that the rankings in *current activity* were the same for the category of *importance* indicated that the amount of activity spent on these items was somewhat proportional to their perceived importance.

Corporate-Higher Education Forum. The members of CHEF were asked their perceptions as to the extent that university academic planners react to input from the four external groups-- professionals, business personnel, government officials, and the public-at-large. Table 5.4 presents their responses. Similar to the relationship previously discussed between Table 4.1 and Table 5.3, Table 5.4 is a replication of Table 4.2 but the information is discussed from a different perspective.

Table 5.3

Means of Responses of Vice-Presidents (Academic) on the Extent to Which Academic Planners Obtain Comments from Stakeholders When Assessing or Developing Academic Program Proposals

Activity of academic planners	Current level of activity				Importance of activity			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Obtain information from faculty members	4.50	0.51	1	34	4.27	0.67	1	34
Obtain information from students	3.06	0.92	2	34	3.97	0.76	2	34
Obtain information from professionals in the university's geographic locality	2.84	0.88	3	32	3.42	0.85	3	31
Obtain information from businesses in the university's geographic locality	2.49	0.97	4	33	3.00	0.98	4	32
Obtain information from provincial government officials	2.38	1.24	5	32	2.81	1.03	5	32
Obtain information from public at large	1.94	0.77	6	31	2.68	0.75	6	31
Mean of means *	3.27	0.43	---	---	3.86	0.33	---	---

Notes : 1. The scale for *Current level of assessing criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Considerable extent; 5 = A great deal; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. The scale for *Importance of criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate importance; 4 = Considerable importance; 5 = Great importance; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

3. * Mean of means = mean of responses of vice-presidents (academic) for all of the 39 questionnaire items.

Table 5.4

Means of Responses of Corporate-Higher Education Forum Members on the Extent to Which Academic Planners Obtain Comments from Stakeholders When Assessing or Developing Academic Program Proposals

Activity of academic planners	Current level of activity				Importance of activity			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Obtain information from provincial government officials	3.44	0.82	1	16	2.67	0.69	4	18
Obtain information from professionals in the university's geographic locality	2.63	0.62	2	16	3.28	0.75	2.5	18
Obtain information from business people in the university's geographic locality	2.47	0.51	3	17	3.47	0.62	1	17
Obtain information from public at large	2.38	0.81	4	16	3.28	0.75	2.5	18
Mean of means *	2.98	0.38	---	---	3.69	0.34	---	---

Notes : 1. The scale for *Current level of assessing criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Considerable extent; 5 = A great deal; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. The scale for *Importance of criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate importance; 4 = Considerable importance; 5 = Great importance; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

3. * Mean of means = mean of responses of CHEF members for all 18 questionnaire items.

The most striking difference between Table 5.4 and Table 5.3 is the item, "React to comments for change from provincial government officials." This item had the highest mean (3.44) by the CHEF in *current activity* and last in *importance* (mean=2.67). However, the VPAs considered a similar but not identical item next to last in both *current activity* (mean=2.38) and *importance* (mean=2.81). The CHEF respondents perceived that the academic planners at universities interact more with the provincial government officials than was indicated by the VPAs.

University of Alberta. During the interviews, several individuals offered their opinions on how someone who is not a university academic staff member can encourage curricular changes at a university. The one theme which evolved from the discussions was the need to have someone in place who is attached to a university department or discipline to promote the proposal. One senior academic administrator at the University made this point clear; the most critical factor is leadership, and

> you always need somebody who is very committed to it, and for a new program in a university it has to be somebody within the institution. Other programs just seem to be in the pipeline forever usually because they don't have a strong leader. If you don't have the leaders, it doesn't happen.

A second professor considered that a spokesman was needed with "credibility in the university's academic community. There is no sense in putting someone forward as the spokesperson who doesn't have credibility or can't command the respect of the colleagues, particularly outside of the unit that is proposing the program." Another added that "In my experience, I would have great difficulty putting my finger on proposals that the University endorsed that were not sponsored by a conventional unit within the University."

Apart from the need to have an internal advocate, other suggestions were offered which would assist in the promotion of a new proposal originating from the outside. One senior academic administrator, commenting on program development and

approval activities, stated that "One has to start from the premise that this is a political process; therefore, you have to ask yourself 'What are good political strategies?' " This individual added that one of the big changes in Canadian politics "has been the role of interest groups, and the increasing importance of them. Sometimes governments have to act quickly to try to counteract these interest groups, don't give them a chance to get organized." The emergence of interest groups as political stratagems was demonstrated by another who commented on the promotion of program proposals and the external "thrusts which are largely the result of lobbying from special interest groups [such as] industry coming forward now with some increased pressure, and the chambers of commerce." An example of the effectiveness of lobbying was submitted by an individual from one of the professions who described the benefit of "the national professional association making a strong statement about how this program is really important and helping to support our case."

A third step to achieve support of a program proposal would be to "build support in the community or harness the support that exists in the broader community for such a program." A fourth strategy would be "to try to manage publicity and information flow in a way that draws attention to the need for such a program." As related by one academic, people need

> some other kind of hook to give the program proposal some sense of reality. One of the things that has always been interesting to me is when you are meeting with groups of people and make some statement or ascertain advocating something and somebody will say, 'I read about that a couple of weeks ago' or 'I saw something on TV.'

Integration of Needs With Autonomy and Academic Freedom

Regarding the content of academic programming at universities, what is the appropriate balance, if any, between meeting the needs of society and having academic programs that originate from the strength of the individual and collective wisdom of the

faculty members? What factors help to define this balance? These are questions at the centre of the debate in university programming.

Universities have maintained, as essential, the need for academic autonomy and freedom (Brubacher, 1977; Cameron, 1990). Historically, these two attributes were not always present and were sources of jurisdictional interplay between universities and public authorities. Le Goff (1980) described the new intelligentsia of the academic class during the Industrial Revolution, as compared to the Middle Ages, as "a revolutionary one which more directly challenged the public authorities and obeyed their command only insofar as these powers themselves [academics] were the servants of ideals and the principles transcending mere raison d'état and ruling class interest" (p. 149). The following section addresses the issues of autonomy and academic freedom and how they interact with an institution's degree of responsiveness.

Vice-presidents (academic). The VPAs were asked several questions that related to the interaction of the various needs of constituents both internal and external to the university. Table 5.5 displays the means of their responses to these questions. The means for the first four items in the table--"Fits with the needs and requirements of the relevant scholarly disciplines"; "Relate the new program to other campus programs"; "Realize the need for contemporary changes"; and "Meets students' needs for personal academic development"--all were at or above the mean of means of VPAs' responses for both *current level of guideline usage* (3.27) and *importance of the guideline* (3.86). In fact, the mean for realizing the need for contemporary changes (4.52) was well above the mean of means for importance and demonstrated the great significance that the VPAs placed on this item. This suggested that in these areas, in the opinion of the VPAs, the universities are performing well, and that it is important to maintain these activities.

Table 5.5

Means of Responses of Vice-Presidents (Academic) on the Extent to Which Academic Planners Use Criteria Based on Needs to Assess Proposals and the Importance of These Criteria in Program Development

Criteria used by academic planners	Current level of criteria usage				Importance of criteria			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Program fits with the needs and requirements of the relevant scholarly disciplines	3.79	0.74	1	33	4.03	0.77	4	33
Planners relate the new program to other campus programs	3.68	0.84	2	34	4.21	0.69	2	34
Planners realize the need for contemporary changes	3.59	0.93	3	34	4.52	0.71	1	33
Program meets students' needs for personal academic development	3.27	1.02	4	34	4.16	0.72	3	32
Planners assess present demand for students	3.18	1.06	5	34	3.85	0.78	6	34
Planners identify similar programs at other institutions	3.12	1.09	6.5	34	3.71	0.91	7	34
Planners assess projected demand for students	3.12	1.07	6.5	34	4.00	0.76	5	34
Planners oversee a formalized needs assessment process	2.41	1.01	8	32	3.70	0.84	8	30
Mean of means *	3.27	0.43	---	---	3.86	0.33	---	---

Notes : 1. The scale for *Current level of assessing criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Considerable extent; 5 = A great deal; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. The scale for *Importance of criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate importance; 4 = Considerable importance; 5 = Great importance; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

3. * Mean of means = mean of responses of vice-presidents (academic) for all of the 39 questionnaire items.

Regarding the question, "Relate the new program to other campus programs," one VPA wrote that "these items are very important because of provincial approval process for funding new programs." Another added that "possible duplication is also given careful scrutiny." For the question, "Realize the need for contemporary changes," one VPA commented on a developing trend: "Fiscal realties and major budget reductions will *compel* recognition of the need for change in what is done and how." Another emphasized that "members of the university community as a whole are not yet fully coming to grips with the need for change in the current constrained economic environment for higher education."

With the question, "Meets students' needs for personal academic development," one VPA was concerned that "student/learner needs, too often are underestimated or ill-considered."

For "Present and projected demand for students," a VPA wrote that "assessment of student demand is addressed before it reaches the formal planning stage (i.e., before it leaves the local academic unit)." Another noted a difference between particular domains of the university by writing that the tendency to assess demand was "true for professional programs but not for humanities development."

Of special interest in Table 5.5 are the means for the last item, "Oversee a formalized needs assessment program," which were significantly below the overall mean of means for both *current level* and *importance*. These responses demonstrated a difference in operational thinking between universities and corporate enterprises. Business and industry tend to assess a market potential before they develop a product or service. According to the VPAs, universities are not as concerned in this regard. This tendency not to formalize the assessment was supported by a VPA who wrote on the questionnaire that "these assessments are required of all proposals; however, the assessments of proponents tend to be accepted at face-value--planners do not typically

validate these independently." In identifying a changing trend, another wrote that "for new programs, this is given considerable emphasis which is likely to increase in the future." Thus, although universities may consider themselves to be responsive, the question remains, "to whom?" As discussed in a later chapter of this dissertation, a definitive answer to this question is elusive.

Corporate-Higher Education Forum. Table 5.6 displays the means of responses to five questions, four of which are similar to items in Table 5.5, in the area of accommodating needs. For the four common questions asked of the two groups of respondents, the means of the last two items of Table 5.6 displayed the largest difference between current level of activity and importance compared with the means of the VPA responses for the second last and third last items in Table 5.5. This difference occurred in the perceived importance of these activities and was as follows. The second last item in Table 5.6, "Identify similar programs at other institutions (i.e., redundancy), "was ranked as the most important in Table 5.6 but seventh out of eight in importance in Table 5.5. The significance of universities being aware of the programs in other institutions was emphasized by Dr. J. Stubbs, President of Simon Fraser University, at the eleventh annual meeting of the Corporate-Higher Education Forum, when he stated that "universities, colleges, and businesses should look for ways to complement one another's education initiatives, building partnerships based upon their strengths to use limited resources well" (Corporate-Higher Education Forum, 1993, p. 12).

The last item in Table 5.6, "Assess projected demand for graduates of the proposed program," obtained the second highest mean for importance (mean=4.00) in Table 5.6 for the CHEF respondents and had only the fifth highest mean (4.00) out of eight items answered by the VPAs in Table 5.5. The means of 4.00 for both the VPAs and CHEF respondents indicated "considerable" importance.

Table 5.6

Means of Responses of CHEF Respondents on the Extent to Which Academic Planners Use Criteria Based on Needs to Assess Proposals and the Importance of These Criteria in Program Development

Criteria used by academic planners	Current level of criteria usage				Importance of criterai			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Ensure that the program meets students' needs for personal academic development	3.47	0.94	1	17	3.78	0.65	3	18
Assess present demand by students (i.e., social demand)	2.88	0.62	2	16	3.50	0.92	4.5	18
Assess present demand for graduates of the proposed program	2.65	0.79	3	17	3.50	0.79	4.5	18
Identify similar programs at other institutions (i.e., redundancy)	2.43	0.65	4	14	4.06	0.93	1	16
Assess projected demand for graduates of the proposed program	2.38	0.50	5	16	4.00	0.97	2	18
Mean of means *	2.98	0.38	---	---	3.69	0.34	---	---

Notes : 1. The scale for *Current level of assessing criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Considerable extent; 5 = A great deal; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. The scale for *Importance of criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate importance; 4 = Considerable importance; 5 = Great importance; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

3. * Mean of means = mean of responses of CHEF members for all 18 questionnaire items.

University of Alberta. Autonomy provides academics with sole authority to select what is to be taught and academic freedom provides them the protection to teach the subject matter the way they wish without fear of retribution. These two issues have been the causes of distress over the years and up to the present between faculty groups and senior administration of universities as well as between universities and their external constituencies.

Although both autonomy and academic freedom have their merits, they are often seen by external stakeholders as preventing greater degrees of responsiveness. One interviewee captured the sentiments of the external constituents by stating that "it seems to be that we're very costly and a pain--the way we behave to the rest of the world, being judgmental about everybody and we do it in a very haughty way." Later in the interview he added "What people from the outside don't like about universities is the autonomy in universities and probably the overbearing attitudes that we have vis a vis the rest of the world."

Another stated that "as the economy goes the way it's gone in the past decade, society becomes more conservative in its general orientation and a more conservative society becomes suspicious of anything that's public sector and quite willing to believe critics about the public sector." These attitudes were supported by Dr. P. Gray, Chairman of the Corporation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who said that "the historical mistrust by the public of elitist institutions of all kinds puts universities at a disadvantage" (Corporate-Higher Education Forum, 1993, p. 25).

Therefore, the main difficulty in university programming from an external-to-the-university perspective has been the traditional claim of the academics to be the sole initiators and purveyors of academic content. However, another University of Alberta professor, in discussing the formation of an outreach graduate program, stated that

> program development is not just market-driven so to speak. It's not just the employers designing the program or potential students designing the program because if they had their way, we would have a totally part-time program and this would not sit well with the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Some interviewed professors identified the current and changing attitudes pertaining to autonomy and academic freedom existing within the University of Alberta. One stated that "we're responding as fast as we can. We think it's terribly important for us to do that. Partly because the need is there and partly for political reasons. We have to meet it these days--you can't survive as an island unto yourself off at the edge of the university." Another stated that "the complexion of the university and the parts of society to which it needs to answer are changing." A third commented that

> academic considerations are always paramount but the practicalities of the world these days are such that we must bring them into account. One should in some cases justify some units at the university just for their own sake, but there are other circumstances where changing times and such indicate that we may have to change things. As things fall off, there are alternatives for the students elsewhere in the province or country.

Still another stated that

> North American, research-intensive, publicly funded universities are all beginning to recognize that they are supported by a society that expects something in return for that support. In terms of what's expected for that support, it varies, but more and more universities are coming to the realization that they owe something back to the society on which they are dependent.

Finally, a senior academic administrator commenting on the balance between meeting the needs of society and academics said that

> obviously there has to be a balance but it is shifting in terms of the public's expectations for responsiveness on the part of the university. Years ago when fewer people were associated with the university, when our economy was more agricultural in emphasis, and also when the global influences weren't as pervasive, people felt that the university was a place for the elite and that the people within the university knew best. As a consequence there wasn't much concern about how responsive the university was. That has all changed over the last 25 years. That rate of change is accelerating and the expectations are that more and more the university community should be responsive to the economic and social well-being of the nation and of the province.

Summary

This chapter presented information on universities in general, and the University of Alberta in particular, regarding the degrees of responsiveness relevant to the development and approval of new academic programs. Two major themes, with sub-themes, were reviewed. The balance between meeting societal and academic needs was first discussed. Second, perceptions on the degree of responsiveness of universities were presented, supported by examples.

As shown in this chapter, there were many opinions on the complex question of the purpose and role of universities. The university has evolved to be a comprehensive institution in society where it serves many of the needs of many people but cannot serve the various needs of everyone.

The five items which had the highest means for *current level of activity* in the VPAs' responses for this chapter were "Academic planners consider input from faculty members" (mean=4.50), "Program fits with the needs and requirements of the relevant scholarly disciplines" (3.79), "Ensure that program meets the curricular needs of the various professions (i.e., provides specialized skills and knowledge)" (3.76), "Planners relate the new program to other campus programs" (3.68), and "Planners realize the need for contemporary changes" (3.59). The two items which had the lowest means for *current level of activity* in the VPAs' responses for this chapter were "Academic planners consider input from provincial government officials" (1.94) and "Academic planners consider input from the public-at-large" (2.38).

The five items which had the highest means for *importance* in the VPAs' responses were "Planners realize the need for contemporary changes" (4.52), "Academic planners consider input from faculty members" (4.27), "Planners relate the new program to other campus programs" (4.21), "Program meets students' needs for personal academic development" (4.16), and "Program fits with the needs and

requirements of the relevant scholarly disciplines" (4.03). The two items with the lowest mean for *current activity* also had the lowest means for *importance* (2.68 and 2.81 respectively).

The three items which had the highest means for *current level of activity* in the CHEF members' responses for this chapter were "Ensure that the program meets students' needs for personal academic development" (mean=3.47), "React to comments for change from provincial government officials" (3.44), and "Assess present demand by students (i.e., social demand) (2.88). The three items which had the lowest means for *current level of activity* in the CHEF members' responses were "Ensure that the program meets the personnel needs of the various businesses, industries, and professions (i.e., it will provide a suitable number of graduates) (2.24), "React to comments for change from public-at-large" (2.38), and "Assess projected demand for graduates of the proposed program" (2.38).

The three items which had the highest means for *importance* in the CHEF members' responses were "Ensure that the program meets the curricular needs of the various businesses, industries, and professions (i.e., it will provide specialized skills and knowledge) (4.17), "Identify similar programs at other institutions (i.e., redundancy)" (4.06), and "Assess projected demand for graduates of the proposed program" (4.00). The three items which had the lowest means for *importance* in the CHEF members' responses were "React to comments for change from provincial government officials" (2.67), "React to comments for change from public-at-large" (3.28), and "React to comments for change from professionals in the university's geographic locality" (3.28).

The responses from this study's interviews indicated that some professors were adamant about universities maintaining the traditional role of generation and dissemination of knowledge for its own sake. However, other professors indicated a

changing trend towards responding in a better fashion to society's needs, albeit maintaining academic integrity in studying what needs to be studied. However, deciding what needs to be studied remains a complex and controversial issue. Therefore, identifying the needs of society and universities is not a straightforward process. To understand whether the needs of society are being met at a university, one must understand the complicated nature of the institution's structure and function.

Many academic programs--both credit and non-credit--at the University of Alberta have demonstrated responsiveness to the needs of its external stakeholders in several ways. Some examples have been through formal program changes and additions, and the creation of processes for greater interaction between internal and external constituents and among the various University departments. At the University, most of the credit programs which have satisfied particular societal needs have been in the professional faculties (14 of 17) with the remaining three being from the Faculty of Science.

University programs are constantly being evaluated in order to improve and update them. However, the practice of conducting reviews to reduce a department's program offerings remains rare. Also, faculty members are reviewed annually for summative and formative evaluations.

The balance between programs being practically based--this in the minds of many external constituents would demonstrate responsiveness-- and being purely academic was aptly described by a senior academic administrator at the University of Alberta:

> It is most unfortunate if any educational institution, in a desire to be sensitive to the needs of the larger community, simply becomes a respondent to the perceived needs and nothing more than that. There are universities of high quality that achieve a good balance between the needs in the larger society and the need to search for truth and to focus on that which is perhaps narrowly academic and scholarly.

The comparison of universities with businesses regarding style of policy making and operational efficiency has drawn the ire of most academics. Information on the differences between these two types of organizations was presented, with the main distinction being that universities are run from a distinct philosophical tenet--the pursuit of truth versus the pursuit of profit. Universities typically face few serious deadlines for adoption or modification of programs, while the business sector frequently has to produce new products in a specified time frame. Therefore, the *efficiency* of each type of organization is a topic of debate and misunderstanding.

External agencies wishing to advocate academic changes at a university must be aware of the strategic and political approaches needed to achieve success with their proposals. The successful adoption of a program is often a measure of the degree that it is perceived to have originated from within the university.

CHAPTER 6

COMMUNICATION OF THE UNIVERSITY'S MISSION

Each university has a unique mission to fulfill, with its institutional mission statement expressing in general terms what that university perceives to be its guiding principles. However, the mission of a university may not be fully understood by external stakeholders nor indeed by individuals within the institution. To assist in evaluating the degree to which a university is responsive in its academic planning, a comprehensive awareness of its mission by all constituents is necessary. In other words, is the mission appropriate in meeting the needs of the constituents? Also, does a university achieve what *it* believes to be important in academic programs?

This chapter discusses the extent of understanding by both external and internal constituents of the universities' mission. Perceptions about the importance of promoting the universities' missions are also presented. Discussing a university's mission assists in addressing the overall research question, "How are academic program proposals developed and to what extent are university academic planners perceived to be responsive to internal and external pressures?" Some data originally presented in Chapter 4 are repeated in this chapter in order to integrate all of the information in the study relevant to the mission of the universities.

Present Understanding of a University's Mission

Understanding the mission enables one to assess the degree to which the university has been responsive in its academic planning. This section discusses Specific Research Question 3.1: "How effective is communication about universities' mission statements?"

The University of Alberta's mission statement was adopted after much debate by the GFC on 28 January, 1991 (see GFC minutes, 28 January, 1991, pp. 7-9), after

being first introduced as a draft at a previous GFC meeting (see GFC minutes, 19 November 1990, pp. 858-865). As found in the University of Alberta *Calendar 1994/95*, the abbreviated mission statement is as follows:

> The mission of the University of Alberta is to serve our community by the dissemination of knowledge through teaching and the discovery of knowledge through research. The mission will be carried out in a select number of fields and professions, to be determined within the context of a province-wide educational system and based upon the highest national and international standards. (p. 4)

The reasons for development of the mission statement, apart from a request from the Alberta government, were

> more importantly [to provide] a statement of the values and aspirations of the University community, which would be articulated independently of the Government's request. The Mission Statement would be used internally for the academic community and by the Board of Governors in addressing the strategic direction of the University; and in the University's relations with the outside community. (GFC minutes, 19 November, 1990, p. 858)

With an emphasis on the University of Alberta, interview participants were first asked "How effectively has the University of Alberta communicated its mission or raison d'être to the outside communities?" and then " How important is it for a university to do so?"

External Perceptions of University's Mission

University of Alberta. Of all the questions asked of the University of Alberta professors, the two listed immediately above had the most consistent answers among the interviewees. The responses to the first question--the second is discussed in the subsequent section--were essentially along the following lines:

> My personal observation of the university's conveyance of its general mission is that we are not very well understood beyond campus except by people from our professions specifically.
>
> At the University we have not been as effective as we can be so people don't understand--their perceptions and the judgments of us are perhaps skewed.

> Albertans see us as important institutions for higher education. At the same time they often don't understand all that we're about or what we are trying to accomplish.

Several professors identified the need to promote the mission to various stakeholders, each of whom has differing opinions of the university. One stated that universities "devote all of our resources to offering our programs, dealing with the internal kinds of organizational and political realities. However, we haven't spent very much time dealing with the outside political and social realities." He added that "we need to become more active in communicating to our publics what it is that we contribute to our society."

The provincial government is one of the major stakeholders for the University of Alberta. However, as one individual stated, there are a "number of faculty who feel that the University has not been aggressive enough in pushing the University. The University administration has felt that it could not be aggressive with the government and has tried to play a more conciliatory role." This sentiment of non-understanding by the provincial government was supported by another respondent:

> [For] MLAs who are sitting across the river, if I went over there today and said 'For what is the University of Alberta famous? For what should you be proud of us?', they wouldn't be able to tell me. They would compare us to the University of Calgary or the University of Saskatchewan. They couldn't say, 'Gee, we have the best 'X' in the world.'

Finally, another added pejoratively that "maybe we are so busy that we don't think about communicating our mission, but it is obvious that if the politicians are going to run this place by opinion polls, we had better have good results in the opinion polls."

The effectiveness of communicating the University's mission was, according to some faculty members, dependent upon whether the level of programs being considered was graduate or undergraduate. One professor commented that communicating the University's mission "certainly could be improved. In these financial times it's

obviously important to convey that to the general public. In graduate programs, the University of Alberta has done a pretty good job of advertising itself."

However, the actual fundamental principles of the mission statement were not fully accepted by all the faculty. One was not supportive of the focus on the graduate program at the expense of the undergraduates. He vigorously stated that "the University of Alberta wants to be Berkeley, wants to be the Sorbonne, wants to be Harvard. Why can't we want to just be the University of Alberta in Alberta? If you're already are at the top in Alberta, it would not be that bad." He rationalized his perception of the new university mission statement by adding that

> this might be the wrong perception but in the mission statement they keep using the term a 'research university'; that's fine but why repeat it? We know that the university does research. In great universities, at least in North America, the big names that we know, and I don't know whether they should be our model or not, they attach all the importance to undergraduates. They think that is really the foundation of the university. They don't harp on the graduate department because their undergraduates are their most precious resource in many ways. This university hasn't been able to communicate that.

This professor concluded his opinions on the mission statement by describing the role of the University of Alberta as a provincial university, and that its first responsibility is really to serve the needs of Alberta, and especially of Edmonton. However, he questioned who is going to determine the needs.

Another academic commented on the value of promoting the University's mission:

> The public doesn't always understand the mission of the university. I don't think that even if the mission were explained to the public that they would accept it necessarily because there are some pretty fair [negative] biases about the Ivory Tower and what goes on here. I don't think we'll ever be totally successful but I think a better job could probably be done.

Another added that although

> universities are one of the last great hopes for our society--there is a lot of talent and idealism still at universities--there is some cynicism too, but universities remain a pretty positive force in our society. People recognize that. The

> problem is that there is a resentment from people who don't make it to university, who make it the hard way and then often get into positions [of authority] where they don't know what a university is.

He identified some current Alberta politicians as examples of political leaders who do not fully understand the university, because they didn't have a higher education experience.

Negative comments about the deficiency in understanding or communicating a university's mission, and especially the mechanisms to achieve it, were submitted throughout the interviews. One topic which repeatedly surfaced was the right of tenure. A University faculty member emphasized that "there are a couple of things that bedevil the university--first, tenure and the second thing is that the man on the street doesn't understand that a professor does more than teach." This individual proceeded to discuss the tenure issue:

> The first thing that I encounter most frequently from non-university people when they find out I've been associated with a university is, 'What do you think of tenure?' That whole notion of tenure is something the people associate with universities, and the association is negative. They associate it with featherbedding, inefficiency, high costs.

Another presented both views of the tenure issue by adding that

> in some ways the protection that's offered through tenure has advantages certainly for the individual, but for the institution it has disadvantages in the sense that some people are overly protected. Their autonomy and their independence turns them into being an independent entity that nobody can touch. I wouldn't say it's general, but that happens and it is difficult for the public to live with.

This common public opinion of tenure was summarized by Kapica (1994) who wrote in *The Globe and Mail* an article entitled "Tenure: O, to have a job that lasts forever." He presented a history of tenure in North America, followed by a modern perspective of nonacademics, and even some academics, which he consolidated by this statement in the article's subtitle: "Recessions come and go but you need never fear if you're a

professor and on a university payroll for life" (p. D3). The implication here is that the public feels that with tenure, universities (i.e., faculty members) do not have to be responsive because they have job security.

The issue of tenure and the current considerations in its debate have been recognized by the University of Alberta's senior administration. In the 29 October 1993 issue of *Folio*, (see Robb, 1993) the Board of Governors passed a motion to affirm, through a change in definition in the Faculty Agreement, that the purpose of tenure is to protect academic freedom. This motion to have the term redefined (by the negotiating teams of the Board and the Association of Academic Staff of the University of Alberta (AAS:UA)) was passed "because the present definition in the Faculty Agreement sounds like job security, [and] many of the public members of the Board had previously seen tenure as something that prevented the removal of incompetent faculty" (p. 1). The spirit of the motion for redefinition was supported in the same article by the President of the AAS:UA who stated that he saw the motion "in general, as a small victory for the concept of tenure and as evidence that the Vice-President (Academic) has been reasonably successful in arguing the case [to the Board]" (p. 1).

Again in the same article, the question of incompetent faculty being protected was addressed by the AAS:UA President who commented that although there is a negative stereotype out there of incompetence being protected, "the Vice-President (Academic) has collected documentation of our 0(d) process that clearly demonstrates that that is not the case" (p. 1). The 0(d) procedure

> involves the [University of Alberta's] Faculty Salary and Promotions Committee determining that the academic performance of a faculty member is such that he or she should not be awarded a merit increment and, furthermore, that the 'zero increment' be cited as 'category d' (unsatisfactory and unacceptable) with that determination being made in two of the last three years (Robb, 1993, p. 1).

According to a member of the senior academic administration of the University in a telephone conversation on 26 May 1994, for the period 1987-1993, 59 faculty members

had been given notice of inadequate performance based on their 0(d) evaluations. As of that date, 31 had retired or resigned from the staff, 3 had been placed on total disability, 10 had improved their performance and had the 0(d) classification removed, 2 had been dismissed with their situations being appealed through arbitration avenues, and the remainder had just recently been given the notices and therefore their final academic future at that stage was inconclusive. These figures illustrate that the University of Alberta continues to be responsible in other areas beyond the quality and scope of its academic content--in this situation, continuously monitoring the quality of the professoriate.

However, these figures from the University contrasted with those in the report in the 19 March 1994 issue of the *Globe and Mail* (see Kapica, 1994) which *estimated* that "no more than 50 tenured teachers have been given the 'sack' [in Canada] in the past century" (p. D3). This statement tends, however, to affirm what one of the interviewees stated: "Those who promote tenure and defend it to the end will say that there are all kinds of ways to get rid of rotten apples, which is true. The mechanisms are there but they are a bit iffy because it really takes strenuous efforts to get rid of people." Thus, although academics and senior administration regard the issue of academic freedom as sacrosanct, protecting this freedom against incompetence is often difficult to achieve.

The other issue that "bedevils" the university--"that the man on the street doesn't understand that a professor does more than teach"--provided further comment from the interviewees on the question of external constituents understanding a university's mission and especially the day-to-day reality of an academic. One commented that "there is some understanding of the research function but when they hear somebody teaches 9 hours a week or 6 hours a week or even 3 hours a week, they think, 'what is happening here?' " Another added that

> I see it as problematic when friends that I know quite well will tell me that I've really got it made now because I'm only teaching nine hours a week. 'What a soft job!' In their minds I have nothing else to do. However, they will never talk about the contribution of the kind of programs that we have here. People don't have a good picture of what it is that our faculty do in any of their other responsibilities.

There are several reasons why the normal teaching load is 6 to 9 hours a week. First, the academic content, direction, and day-to-day operations of the university are, for the most part, administered by the faculty whether it be by formal appointment to a senior administrative position (although the individual still has a home department, unit, or discipline) or by the plethora of committees which develop and implement policy and adjudicate on academic issues pertinent to the university. Second, each faculty member has two general responsibilities which are the generation and dissemination of knowledge. Thus, along with teaching, academics are expected to be creative in their area of expertise through research, professional enhancement, or literary and artistic accomplishments, among other ways. Third, the time spent on preparing for classes, meeting with and advising students, and adjudicating student academic performance quickly fills the daily timetable of academics, but it is often not considered by the various constituents who are external to the university.

A primary reason why external agencies misunderstand the daily work habits of university academics resides in the unique culture of these institutions. They do not operate like major corporations or government departments. However, members of the lay public have failed to fully understand the effect of the cultural distinctions among the various departments and disciplines and do not fully visualize how these customs are different from those in non-university institutions.

Internal Perceptions of the University's Mission

Misunderstanding of its own mission can be found within a university itself. As an example, in his paper on strategic planning and reform in higher education, Haughey

(1994) noted that there is a possibility that "in an attempt to re-mold the culture of the University [of Alberta], the administration of the University, notably the president, miscalculated the reaction of faculty members both to the directions [of reform] being proposed and the processes employed to achieve them" (p. 21).

This tendency to misinterpret within universities was illustrated by Gumport (1993) in her paper on the contested terrain during academic program reduction at two American research universities. From her research, she found five major categories of language used by different constituents within the universities to describe the academic program cuts and the variations in interpretation of what the cuts mean:

> 1. *executive administrators* who spoke in corporate terms (e.g., downsizing)
> 2. *subordinate administrators* (e.g., deans) aligned themselves with first tier's discourse of alterations and, in a language of rationalization, tried to make sense of the content and process of budget decisions
> 3. *faculty research stars* who justified their existence in language of meritocracy in the context of national science policy
> 4. *target faculty* spoke in victim language of injustice, and
> 5. *contiguous faculty* considered themselves as 'surviving-yet-still-vulnerable' spectators, or as advocates of those cuts, allied in the collective defense of faculty rights. (p. 285)

In citing the work of Clark (1983), Haughey (1994) further distinguished the ways that academics and administrators interpret situations and especially the mission of any university. Haughey (1994) paraphrased that the "academic culture, as exemplified by the discipline or faculty members' areas of expertise, is strongly oriented towards academic and departmental autonomy and often lacks a fundamental appreciation of the overall unity of the organization" (p. 20). He added that "administrative culture is strongly instrumental or oriented towards a unified view of the organization as an enterprise. Critically, the administrative culture is clearly viewed by most academics as subservient to the academic culture" (pp. 20-21). From these distinctions occurring within the institutions, one can see the difficulty in the communication to and thus

understanding by external constituents when many differences in interpretation exist within universities.

University of Alberta. One faculty member acknowledged this potential for misinterpretation within the universities when, in discussing the mission of universities, he commented that

> the mission is constantly changing. For example, I'm not sure what the University's mission is with regard to off-campus delivery of graduate programs. It seems to change from year to year--some years they seem to be encouraging it and at other times they seem to be discouraging us from becoming involved. If you're as equivocal as that about the whole thing and you don't have a clear mission, then how can you be communicating missions out there?

To further illustrate the potential for misinterpretation of the University's mission, this professor added that when "talking about the University's mission, maybe there are missions--I'm not sure that different faculties don't have different missions, that different departments don't have different missions. I'm positive they do."

Importance of Promoting the University's Mission

The following section discusses the issue of promotion of a university's mission and addresses Specific Research Question 3.2: "What importance is placed by stakeholders upon communication to the external community of the universities' mission statements?"

Much of the debate in the literature on university academic planning has been on the issue of autonomy. Generally described, autonomy refers to the right of faculty to be the sole initiator and adjudicator of academic content at any university. As discussed in the preceding chapters, this reticence by academics to allow external stakeholders to assist in academic planning seems to be diminishing in recent times. In light of this new or renewed trend to seek external input, all interviewees were asked, "How important is it for a university to communicate its mission or raison d'être to the outside communities?" This question was asked of them to assist in the understanding by all

stakeholders of the university's academic direction and to relate further the issue of program content with the issue of responsiveness. In other words, if the public does not know the mission of the university, as established by its autonomous nature, how can it evaluate its degree of responsiveness?

Degree of Importance

Vice-presidents (academic) and CHEF. The VPAs and CHEF members were each asked one question relating to universities' missions: "To what extent do academic planners ensure that the program proposal fits with the mission of the university?" Table 6.1 displays the results from both populations. Both groups rated the *current level of assessing criterion* and *degree of importance of criterion* above the mean of means for each group. Of note is the very high degree of importance that the VPAs placed on the issue of the proposal fitting the mission of the university.

One of the VPAs wrote on the questionnaire that "without a doubt there is a rapidly hardening position that this University must emphasize more and declare its unique mission, goals, and accountabilities and link its decision-making processes on all substantive matters to those." This comment supported the views of many of the University of Alberta professors participating in the study. However, a CHEF respondent added to the questionnaire that "that [this particular university] is probably representative in not having a real 'Vision,' a strategy which is aligned together with supporting long-range plans."

University of Alberta. One senior academic administrator at the University of Alberta discussed the importance of promoting its mission through advocating its strategic plan to industry and governmental officials:

> The message we take is, 'We are changing. We are doing some very exciting, innovative things. We are prepared to do things differently, and here are some of the things we are doing' because we are not getting credit for any of the things we are doing. Keep emphasizing that 'we have a plan, we have a vision,

Table 6.1

Means of Responses of Vice-Presidents (Academic) and CHEF Respondents on the Extent to Which Academic Planners Ensure That Program Proposals Fit With the Mission of the University and the Importance of This Activity for Program Development

Activity of academic planners	Current level of assessing criterion				Importance of criterion			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
VPA: Ensure that proposal fits with the mission of the university	3.62	0.89	---	34	4.49	0.67	---	33
Mean of means *	3.27	0.43	---	---	3.86	0.33	---	---
CHEF Ensure that proposal fits with the mission of the university	3.47	1.01	---	17	3.83	0.92	---	18
Mean of means **	2.98	0.38	---	---	3.69	0.34	---	---

Notes : 1. The scale for *Current level of assessing criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Considerable extent; 5 = A great deal; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. The scale for *Importance of criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate importance; 4 = Considerable importance; 5 = Great importance; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

3. * Mean of means = mean of responses of vice-presidents (academic) for all of the 39 questionnaire items.

4. ** Mean of means = mean of responses of CHEF members for all of the 18 questionnaire items.

> we are moving, and we want you [industry and government] to be part of it.' That was the approach we took. From everything we heard, it was extremely well received--all of a sudden, we caught people's attention. We talked about tenure. We talked about what we're doing with performance appraisal. We talked about the number of '0(d)s' that have been given out. We talked about being selective. We talked about excellence. We talked about making tough choices. Academics don't like to toot their own horn and they also don't like to say, 'this is really outstanding.'

Another senior academic administrator noted that in regard to promoting the University's mission

> it is getting better--no doubt in the last five or ten years things have moved to improve that situation. But for a long time we took society for granted. We continued to do our thing--revenues were pouring in because the oil industry was booming and the government of the day was supportive. I wouldn't say it was awash with money, but certainly it was not having to be too tight with funding provided to universities. So universities had some wonderful years and tended to simply sail along merrily and expect that everything would always be the same. There would never be a need to be accountable. I am not saying they were doing bad things or things that were unacceptable to society or anything like that. They just didn't have to communicate what was going on so they didn't.

One professor stated that promoting the mission of a university is, first, "a perpetual debate" and, second, "it is vital!" He described why this promotion is not done as effectively as it should:

> The problem is finding time to go out. When I was Chair, I used to go out in the high schools, or do adjudications, things of this kind, so that the department was seen in action and was referred to. That doesn't happen that much anymore because, quite frankly, Chairs are swamped with business. They're on the front line of the trenches and the workload has become enormous for them.

Another stated that "in these financial times, it is obviously important to convey the mission to the general public." A third, commenting on the political need to communicate the University's mission, added

> from our point of view when we tried to make the program changes it was important for us to have public support--to have a better understanding of what the mission of the university is and the importance of these kind of program changes. The public is really the source of leverage or pressure on the government which is the final deciding body. In our case it was important for

> the public to know why we were making this change and for us to enlist the aid of the public. When I say public I don't mean just the person on the street; I mean employers and also parents who are aware of the issues.

Another method of promoting a university's mission--through its graduates--was advocated by several interviewees:

> It is important to communicate. However, the leadership can't just come from the university--it has to come from the graduates of the universities. People have to look at their life and say, 'Did I really benefit from my opportunities and from what I learned at university and the experience of university?' If they did they have to tell people. So, maybe we should do a better job in sending our graduates out as missionaries because if we don't we're going to disappear.

A second added that "we try to train students to be ambassadors of this particular Faculty." A third commented on the need of the University to do a better job of sending its graduates out "with the sense that they have one of Canada's pre-eminent degrees that they can justifiably be proud of, that they can step forward with pride and significant confidence and say, 'I'm a graduate from the University of Alberta!' "

An illustration of the manner by which subtle differences in terms can alter one's perception of responsiveness was found in this study. The terms "mission" and "mandate" were used synonymously not only by this researcher but also by the interviewed academics and questionnaire respondents. However, both terms do not necessarily have the same meaning. Holdaway and Small (1994) delineated the two by stating that institutional mandates are externally generated while missions originate internally. Although the difference may appear subtle at first glance, in the minds of external and internal constituents this may not be the case. Linguistically, a mission statement has goals, aims, and ideals; a mandate summarizes tasks which must be fulfilled. Succinctly stated, a mission offers direction while a mandate consists of commands.

Mission Statements and Program Development

As demonstrated in the previous sections, a high degree of importance is placed on university mission statements, the purposes of which are to communicate to all stakeholders the role of the university and how the institution intends to perform that role. However, what is the relationship between these statements and program directions at universities? This section discusses Specific Research Question 3.3: "What linkages are perceived to exist between universities' mission statements and program development?"

Degree of Linkage

University of Alberta. Although the majority of the University of Alberta faculty members agreed with the importance of having and promoting a universal mission statement--a sentiment supported by the VPAs and CHEF respondents (see Table 6.1)--there was less agreement among the professors on the usefulness of such mission statements in day-to-day academic planning.

As previously stated, university academic planning is decentralized: "Large complex universities revolve around work decisions at a departmental level and at a faculty level." This decentralization weakens the relationship between a university's mission and academic planning and development processes. One professor noted that "during strategic planning last year we were certainly familiar with both the university's mission statement, and our own faculty statement. But we planned from a faculty perspective."

Another view held by several professors interviewed for the study regarded mission statements as being mainly visionary and are not practically based: "Our University is very grandiose in its mission statement. They talk about world class, about excellence. But we should do the best we can at the department level rather then flap our wings trying to be an eagle." This opinion was supported by Howard (1995)

who commented on how organizations that produce overly pretentious missions statements may be adversely affected. The mission statements read like "typeset sludge. . . . Lots of 'excellence,' 'leadership,' and 'respect for all'. . . . This kind of flannel-mouthing just leads to organizational cynicism." (p. A20) He further discussed the difficulties in "translating noble-sounding concepts into shop-floor realities" because, he commented, "too often, writing high-level statements becomes a substitute for action, not a call for it" (p. A20).

Thus, in this study, the linkage was weak between a university's mission statement and its direct application to academic planning.

Summary

In this chapter, information on a university's mission from the two questionnaires showed that both groups--vice-presidents (academic) and members of the Corporate-Higher Education forum--were in agreement that promoting the mission of a university is of paramount importance to enable a more complete understanding of its academic direction.

This chapter also discussed the mission of the University of Alberta in general with particular emphasis on promoting it to external agencies and constituents in order to increase their understanding of the University's degree of responsiveness. The overall impression from the interviews was that the mission of the university was poorly understood by external constituents. Further, the misunderstanding of the fundamental principles of the mission by constituents internal to the university adds to the confusion about its mission. Also, opinions from this study's participants were offered on whether emphasis should be placed upon undergraduate or graduate programming.

A high level of agreement was obvious that the most prominent external agency for the University of Alberta was the advanced education department of the provincial

government. However, a range of opinions existed about the degree of mutual esteem held by faculty and advanced education officials.

The majority of the interviewees perceived that promoting the mission could be vastly improved and some suggested ways in which this could be done. Specifically, the need for external constituents to understand the issues of tenure, autonomy, and the day-to-day schedule of academics--teaching, research, and service to the university and profession--was discussed. Further, the degree of importance of promoting the mission has increased over the past decade as the demand to rationalize financial support is increasing in all sectors of society. Also, the University of Alberta's mechanisms to guard against professors abusing tenure were presented.

However, some professors offered that promotion of the mission would not work owing to the extremely negative biases which exist in the minds of some individuals external to the university.

A high level of agreement was observed on the importance of having and promoting a mission statement for the entire university. However, there was also a recurring theme that since the expertise for any program planning exists at the departmental or faculty levels, the philosophical direction for a new program should originate predominantly from these units. Indeed the majority of University of Alberta participants mentioned that the particular unit in which they teach has its own mission statement which was used to a greater extent in the unit's academic planning than was the University's statement.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter first presents a summary of the information obtained in the study on university academic program development and responsiveness. Emphasis is placed on the many aspects generally associated with responsiveness in academic planning. The results of the study provide suggestions to assist external agencies, in consultation with appropriate academic units of a university, in advocating new academic programs or major revisions to existing programs.

Overview of the Study

In the mid-1990s, many segments of society are challenging with increasing vigor and audacity the established institutions, including universities. The general purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of and attitudes towards Canadian universities regarding program development and the responsiveness of universities in meeting these challenges for change from external agencies.

Specific research questions focused on aspects such as how academic program proposals are initiated and developed within universities. Information was also obtained on the importance of the criteria and activities considered in both the development of academic program proposals and the logistics for approval of these proposals. This study also examined the frequency with which external agencies suggest program changes, the degree of influence that their suggestions have, and mechanisms for obtaining internal and external support for academic program proposals.

Another aspect of this research surveyed the current and preferred extent of involvement of the provincial department of advanced education and other external agencies in academic program proposal development, the role and mission of universities and their degree of responsiveness, and the importance of promoting the

institutions' programs and achievements. How effectively the university's mission statement is communicated, the importance placed by stakeholders upon communication of the university's mission statement to the external community, and the perceived linkages between universities' mission statements and academic program development were also examined.

The perceptions on university responsiveness to internal and external demands for program change were collected from three sources: (a) a questionnaire (Appendix A) based on 39 criteria used in academic planning as identified in the literature and prepared for 45 vice-presidents (academic) of anglophone universities across Canada; the overall usable return rate was 75.6%; (b) a questionnaire (Appendix B) prepared for 33 corporate (i.e., non-university) board members of the Corporate-Higher Education Forum (CHEF), a national forum based in Montréal; the usable return rate was 54.5%; (c) data were collected through in-person interviews with 17 faculty members and 4 senior academic administrators at the University of Alberta.

Summary of Findings

Each chapter in this dissertation has a summary of the detailed information presented in that chapter. This final chapter summary highlights the overall findings of the study with respect to (a) academic planning and university traditions, (b) program development and approval, (c) university responsiveness, and (d) diversity.

Academic Planning and University Traditions

The responses of the professors who participated in this study reflected their determination to retain the well-established traditions within universities because these institutions have autonomy and are "fully buttressed by their traditional position in society" (Andrews, 1994, p. 3). Academic governance, academic freedom, autonomy, collegial decision making, and tenure are examples of these traditions

which have an effect--whether positive or negative depends on an individual's perception--on overall responsiveness of university academic planning.

Individuals from various constituencies were given the opportunity in interviews to express their views on academic autonomy. Their responses dealt with such issues as (a) the interaction of external agencies with universities, (b) the responsiveness of academics in programming, and (c) the importance of balancing needs of the various constituents. Their answers revealed substantial agreement that maintenance of autonomy was of paramount importance. But what does autonomy mean in the modern context? Has the interpretation of autonomy at universities changed from its original meaning of intellectual independence enjoyed by academics?

Information obtained in the interviews led to the conclusion that a change has occurred in the perception of autonomy. One professor stated resolutely that academics have to use their autonomy to produce change or be prepared to lose it. This professor was adamant that faculty members are in charge of their destiny but that they must realize that calls for changes in the manner by which universities function are increasing. However, autonomy was not universally held in high esteem by all constituents. In fact, it was often referred to in pejorative terms by external constituents.

As discussed in Chapter Two, three categories of authority are associated with the operation of Canadian universities. Birnbaum's (1988) four models used to describe university operations--collegiality, bureaucracy, political, and anarchical, as described in Chapter 1--were supported by the findings of this study. The various combinations of authority and operational paradigms affect how universities operate and are governed. Some faculty members from the University of Alberta offered comments on the degree of perceived inappropriate external influence. These comments were along the lines of Gumport (1993) who wrote on the changes in

terminology used by various groups of academics classified by their perceived degree of security within a university which was being downsized. The greatest difference in the understanding how universities operate was displayed by members of CHEF who consistently provided one of two perspectives: (a) a comparison of universities with business operations, or (b) an appreciation for the complexity of universities--as demonstrated by their hesitancy to complete the questionnaire owing to lack of knowledge.

As the University of Alberta has grown, the bureaucratic operational model has gained further influence. The University appears to be following the pattern for large, comprehensive universities as described by Altbach (1989a):

> An 'administrative estate' has emerged that is now an important part of the academic decisionmaking apparatus. While top administrators come from the ranks of the professoriate, a large and growing number of administrative cadres [professional administrators] have no direct relation to the traditional academic profession. (p. 57)

In describing the present bureaucracy within the University and the call for changes in administrative structure, some faculty members interviewed for the study lamented that some of the decision makers lack sufficient information when making decisions on academic planning. They wanted a return to a more collegial model.

In contrast to the view that maintaining the principles of autonomy is important are the calls by administrators, government officials, and the public for academics to be more accountable. From the literature, the determined resistance of the professoriate to outside interference--of which calls for accountability would be perceived as an example--has been a dominant theme. This resistance was rationalized by an assertion that concepts such as academic freedom and autonomy are undeniable and of paramount importance. In this study's interviews many professors were not reluctant to re-examine the issues associated with these traditional principles. Although there was substantial agreement that the provincial government has no role in determining

what is taught, the majority of faculty members who were interviewed stated that the government has some justification to expect proof of academic program quality. Therefore, this acceptance by the universities of the view that they should attempt to meet the government's expectations of quality demonstrated, at least from these interviews, another example of responsiveness.

However, consistent with the literature, the professors, commenting on the inappropriateness of assessing quality in higher education, did not know whether accurate, uniform, and fair assessments of program quality were possible. Simpson (1992) stated that, in his opinion, "value-for-money auditing [of program quality], whatever its merits, also brings us values-for-money auditing, and the values are those of the auditor" (p. 3). In the case of the University of Alberta, the "auditor" would be the provincial government unless the University takes a proactive stance and uses its autonomy in setting terms of reference for the assessment within the auditing process. These terms of reference would assist in determining what is to be assessed, how it is to be assessed, how the results are to be used, and probably most importantly, if a assessment process could be deemed as valid and appropriate given the nature of a university educational experience.

Varied perceptions were obtained of what it means to be accountable. Given that the goal of universities is to "pursue the truth," as several of the faculty members stated, many of the interview respondents felt they were being programmatically accountable to either the discipline, the particular profession, or to themselves as independent thinkers. Also, they were of the opinion that they were being substantively accountable (Hines, 1988) to the values and norms of academia--the generation and dissemination of knowledge.

The degree of substantive or academic accountability can, in part, be a measure of responsiveness, at least in the opinion of academics. The generation of knowledge

through research is a fundamental role of faculty, but the character of research is not fully understood. Holdaway (1986) noted how academic researchers and lay individuals perceive research in different ways. In pursuit of truth, researchers look at all aspects of the question or problem, whereas lay people consider this stance to be fence-sitting and thus findings relevant to crucial questions--i.e., the "right" answers--are not offered. Therefore, the purposes of research are perceived differently--for the academic, it is pursuit of knowledge; for the lay person, a more practically based rationalization is required. One result of these divergent perspectives is that academics are often regarded as being nonresponsive, whereas they consider themselves to be very responsive. With respect to fiduciary accountability, as often expressed by the governmental bureaucrats (e.g., in "value-for-money" terms), very few of the study's participants offered comment. Thus, although the need for accountability is often used as a check on the performance of universities, the term "accountability" does not have a common meaning to all (Hines, 1988).

Program Development and Approval

Figure 2.3 displays a model which illustrates the planning and approval path along which a university academic program proposal would progress towards its implementation. As shown in the model, which was developed from the information gathered from the literature and confirmed by this study's data, most of the planning, information gathering, initial approval, and implementation occurs at the level of the department through which the intended program will be offered. Moreover, as stated several times during the interviews, once a program proposal has been scrutinized and approved by a department, ratification by the higher levels of a university's administration tends to become easier.

One purpose of the model's design is to illustrate that universities are not as insular as they were in the past. Universities allow an increasing number of avenues

for external input into program proposals. As illustrated in Figure 2.3, and as demonstrated by this study, especially in the professional schools and applied sciences, the strategy for external constituents to have input into academic programming would be to identify an internal, committed advocate for the new program.

To assist in internal/external communications, many visiting committees have been formed by departments within the University of Alberta involving faculty members working with individuals from associated businesses, industries, professions, or government agencies. Also, the University has over 40 institutes to coordinate with external interest groups. The asterisks within the figure indicate the potential for these external agencies to contribute to academic planning. Suggestions for new programs and changes to existing programs along with on-going feedback about programs must be communicated, for the most part, through individuals within the department in question.

Also, in Figure 2.3, an "implementation-feedback-refinement" loop is illustrated. When a program has been approved by a department, the tendency is to have the program remain as a viable entity. As noted throughout the study, although there is an opportunity for feedback in this process, usually at the department level, most often the focus of this feedback is towards retaining the program rather than terminating it.

From this study, two reasons can be proposed why departments tend to preserve a particular program. First, faculty members are mostly collegial in nature and tend not to interfere with their colleagues' expertise (Birnbaum, 1988). They have a sense of trust that the present program is of some value to individuals even though it may not be exactly what a particular faculty member would deem to be important. Second, the resolute belief in the tenet of academic freedom and autonomy,

safeguarded by the professoriate, inhibits university faculty who are not associated with the academic unit in question from soliciting dissolution of a program. Within the hierarchical governance structure of the university, most discontinuations of programs have been initiated at a higher administrative level than the department in question.

University Responsiveness

Information from the interviews, questionnaires, and literature provided some valuable insight into the topic of "responsiveness." Based on the interviews in this study, the University of Alberta has been very responsive as demonstrated by its new academic program adoptions (17 in all) between 1988 and 1993. In fact, every program examined in this study was responsive to someone's or some group's needs. Although faculty members in this study believed the University to be responsive, the term "responsiveness" is difficult to define accurately and can have a different meaning depending upon the context.

The Random House Thesaurus: College Edition (1989), provides these categories of synonyms for the word "responsive": (a) "reactive, retaliatory, sharp, quick to answer, alive, awake;" (b) "susceptible, impressionable;" and (c) "sensitive, sympathetic, compassionate, understanding, receptive, aware of" (p. 603). The listing of so many synonyms indicates scope for significant variations in interpretation of the meaning of "responsiveness." In my opinion, the terms in the first category are nearer to the Government of Alberta's definition of responsiveness--the words suggest a more reactive or time-constrained meaning. However, the terms in the third category are nearer to the definition favored by academics, especially the professors interviewed for this study, who perceive themselves as being responsive--by meeting the needs of groups, disciplines, and, as one professor offered, improving "the quality of life for the whole population of the city, province and country." Academics do not wish to be perceived as being responsive in the manner suggested by the terms in the second

category. These two terms promote the perception that academics can be inappropriately influenced by being susceptible or impressionable to external pressures. Identifying responsiveness in this latter manner often generates a defensive posture of academics especially when claims are made that they are not responsive to meeting society's needs.

Another difficulty in understanding "responsiveness" lies in the values or perceptions which different individuals and groups place on particular programs. A program or program direction that one individual or group perceives as valuable, and therefore worthy of further development in that domain (and thus shows responsiveness), may be perceived by others as being of no value or worth whatsoever. This sentiment was interspersed throughout the interviews. The majority of professors recognized the diversity of programming at the University. One professor emphasized that different departments and faculties have different missions. Thus, varying perceptions of "worthiness" often result and complaints emerge of financial and human resources "going to waste" which create opinions that society is not being served well by university programming. Thus, the answer to the question, "who defines, delimits, and measures whether the needs of society are being met?" remains elusive.

As previously discussed, new program development and adoption occurs within the operational, philosophical, and cultural climate of universities. Therefore, the degree of responsiveness, whether one is talking about amount, rate, or worthiness of program offerings, is affected by traditional practices. But among internal and external constituents, a complete and congruent understanding of the degree of influence and importance that tradition has on a university's academic direction is not common and results in disparate opinions on degree of responsiveness.

Based on the findings from the interviews, the University of Alberta, specifically, and universities in general have been responsive in meeting needs. Along with its credit courses, the institution has non-credit and continuing education classes for individuals who wish to study but not in a degree-granting track. Further examples of responsiveness would be the University's Senate meetings held around the province and the formulation of visiting or advisory committees at the department and faculty levels to correspond with external agencies.

Although academics in the study considered themselves as being responsive, they also noted that the academic planning and approval processes can be perceived as being excessively complex. Several participants in the interviews used metaphors related to inertia--motion or lack of motion--to describe their perceptions of university academic governance.

Diversity

Being too responsive can adversely affect a university. The irony is that the University of Alberta, as one interviewee put it, "is trying to be all things for all people." By doing this without appropriate academic checks and balances, a university can fail in its mandate of pursuing the truth by means of the generation and dissemination of knowledge.

An inclination towards an increasingly broadening range of academic program options could result in one of two unsatisfactory circumstances. The program offerings are either (a) so broad that there is not enough resource support (human, intellectual, or financial) to cover effectively the subject matter in any favorable fashion, or (b) never plentiful enough to satisfy everyone--someone's interests will be excluded. Also, presently there does not appear to be any systematic process at the department level *voluntarily* to review existing programs with their possible dissolution in mind.

Moreover, the University of Alberta has recognized the dangers of too much diversity. The former Vice-President (Academic) of the University of Alberta, in rationalizing the University's reasons for closing of the Faculty of Dentistry as reported in the 3 June 1994 issue of the University's internal newsletter, *Folio* (see Robb, 1994b), stated that in an attempt to achieve excellence with limited means, the senior administration has taken "a selective approach to the allocation of resources and the setting of priorities at all the levels of the institution. We do not seek to cover all possible fields of study, nor to be all things to all people" (p. 1). Of interest here is that the University of Alberta's Board of Governors decided on 13 January 1995 to integrate oral health sciences within a restructured Faculty of Medicine to provide, in the words of President Rod Fraser, "the University with an opportunity to play a leadership role in the development of a program that will be at the forefront of dental education in Canada" (See Dentistry stays . . . .,).

Role of University: Mission or Mandate

One area of questioning which provided breadth of opinion from data sources was the role of a university in today's society. Faculty members and vice-presidents (academic) expressed the role of the university in general, conceptual terms such as being the seat of creative thinking, the place to learn and to work with others, and the site where one can fulfill goals of lifelong learning and improvement of quality of life. Further, as described in this study, universities create a literate, curious, tolerant society, help students to think critically, to expand their horizons, and to understand the context of society or the world. However, the university's roles, complexities, and operational and philosophical culture are not well known by external agencies and the public at large.

This intellectual role of the university has been formalized in Acadia University's *Mission Statement*, (7 May 1994--see Appendix D). That document does

not mention attaining a job or career upon graduation. Also, a passage from the University of Alberta's (1991) *Mission Statement* makes only brief mention of satisfying employment needs:

> The mission of the University is furthermore to serve the local community, the Province, and the country through such activities as promoting culture, stimulating technology transfer, playing a leadership role in health care and primary and secondary education, and strengthening the economy through basic and applied research and the provision of highly trained personnel.

Further, job creation and career development are not mentioned in the *Universities Act* (1992) of the Province of Alberta.

The data from the non-university members of the Corporate-Higher Education Forum, however, provided a different perspective on the mission of a university. Overall, the CHEF statements demonstrated the variance among the views of academics working within universities and external constituents. The obvious difference is the manner in which the focus of a university's role is changed--from the *perceived* abstract realm of knowledge discovery to the more pragmatic purpose of economic stability.

Understanding how missions and mandates of a university differ may assist in defining the role(s) of the institution. Mission statements usually evolve over time; in the case of the University of Alberta's most recent statement, the formal stages of the process took approximately three years. Throughout the development stage of a university's mission statement, faculty, staff, and students discuss the strengths, directions, and objectives that they wish their university to follow. From the process, not only is there a statement which is broadcast locally and beyond, but a strong sense of ownership and familial feelings often arise. Academics often become protective and defensive when the role of their university and its mission are presented in pejorative terms.

On the other hand, a mandate is more concrete than a mission and represents, in more pragmatic terms, what is *expected* of a university. If the mission and the mandate do not harmonize in terminology, focus, or direction, friction among internal and external constituents may arise. In fact, there is often conflict between what one constituency wants done (mandate) and another constituency wishes to do (mission).

Comparison of Universities With Business and Government

The purpose and nature of universities are often not fully understood by representatives of external constituencies, as illustrated by several of the CHEF respondents as well as by some of the University of Alberta professors. Ignorance of how and why universities function as they do can lead to cries of nonresponsiveness. This charge arises from the different methods used by universities in conducting their day-to-day affairs as compared with businesses and governments. There are several reasons for this misinterpretation. One of the main reasons can be found in the unique organizational structure and in operational philosophies of universities compared with those of business and governments. Out of these three types of organizations, three views on *what universities should be doing* can evolve.

The first organizational paradigm is the *collegium*--a collegial philosophy which exists within each level of the university hierarchy and among different levels of the hierarchy. The second paradigm operates from the *political* realm--an alliance with the goal to be re-elected. Therefore, governments try to please the majority of voters (i.e., offer what is *believed* to be politically acceptable). The third perspective is from the *business* realm. The goal in this paradigm is to make a profit and stay ahead of any competitors. However, the distinction of each of these three forms of operation often is not completely understood by individuals within the other two. Moreover, paradigms often have limitations which can become barriers to seeing new opportunities, being so deeply set and unquestioned as to validity.

Universities, businesses, and governments have several features in common. First, they are often large entities with many employees. Second, each has a layered organizational structure whether it be the senior administration of a university and its faculty and staff, the executive boards of business and its employees, or the privy councils and cabinets of governments and bureaucrats. Third, the larger the institution, the greater is the difficulty in communicating to internal as well as external constituents. Finally, the more complex the organizational structure, the more difficult it can be to gain accord on such things as three-year plans, budgets and dispersal of funds, and to achieve satisfaction by its personnel.

Throughout the interviews, a "we-them" posture seemed to pervade discussion about the senior administration. As university professors did not speak about the senior administration in collegial terms, I perceived that once faculty members are elected or appointed to senior administrative positions, a change from the collegial paradigm of faculty members seems to occur. The motives of the senior administrator become suspect in the faculty members' minds and their relationship with faculty colleagues can become more bureaucratic than collegial.

Birnbaum (1989) discussed the unique organizational nature of universities in his paper on the university presidency being a position which has responsibility without complete authority. His comparison and contrast of the positions of university presidents and CEOs of major corporations offered further examples of how university presidents (and senior administrators) are caught in a perplexing position. His emphasis on the shared responsibility and joint effort in university governance that involves all important campus constituencies was supported by the majority of University of Alberta academics at the time of the interviews for this study. The majority of University's academics saw a departure by senior administration from this "shared responsibility" approach. In my opinion, the tone and nature of their

comments, during a time of substantial changes announced by the University and AAECD, were pejorative. Further, results from several of the CHEF respondents did not support this reciprocity in academic development and instead advocated more of a business approach.

An example of the unique position in which presidents and senior administration find themselves is provided by the renewal, tenure, and promotion process at universities. Decisions by performance appraisal committees consisting of faculty colleagues on renewal, tenure, and promotion are made on the applicant's academic merit and not on the institution's financial viability. The university must bear the financial responsibility created by successful applicants, especially one applying for promotion, even though the decision was made away from the senior administration.

In this study's interviews, this perplexing position of the senior administration was not discussed. However, there was support for the necessity to retain the complex process of academic planning and university governance to protect such valued principles as institutional autonomy and academic freedom. Thus, the majority of respondents did not appear to be troubled about administrative structure but concentrated more on maintaining the credibility, from their perspective, of university academic planning.

With respect to political orientation of governments, several professors intimated frustration that the government officials did not have a complete grasp of a university's purposes. They lamented that the delineation between community colleges and universities relating to role and function was not fully appreciated by the advanced education bureaucrats. Further, there was strong agreement that the government, owing to its perceived lack of understanding of universities, must not become involved in the planning of an university's academic initiatives. However, the degree to which universities address the program policy concerns and ideas of a government is

considered, by bureaucrats, as a reflection of responsiveness of these higher education institutions. Also, academics question the extent to which governments should participate in determining responsiveness owing to the suspect ability of the political agents to evaluate what is important in academe.

Holdaway and Small (1994) reported a noticeable change in the attitudes of several governments (of the three countries and four American states reviewed in their study) towards the value and purpose of higher education. According to their findings, the reasons for investment in higher education are changing from the development of the intrinsic value of the individual to the extent to which the person's education can contribute to the economy. This utilitarian philosophy was noted during the interviews. One senior academic administrator commented on academic programs recently approved by the Alberta government:

> Recently the [Alberta] government has supported new programs, particularly in the business area, whether it be in colleges or universities, but have been less supportive of programs of other sorts that do not appear to be in high demand, either from the point of view of the students, or from the point of view of the economy. If someone came up with a Classics program proposal I doubt if it would get very far.

Overall, society appears to be losing faith in many of its institutions. Governments are aware of the increasingly conservative nature of society and are demanding further proof that public money is being well-spent. This approach by the Government of Alberta and elsewhere is at the expense of the major institutions in society, and university education is not immune.

Promotion of the University

One topic provided almost unanimous agreement during the interviews. First, when asked "How effectively has the University promoted its raison d'être or mission to the outside communities?" the majority answered along the lines of "not very well at all." Second, when they were asked "How important is it for the University to do so?"

the majority stressed the great importance of such publicity especially as regards its day-to-day accomplishments. This conviction was further supported by Holdaway and Small (1994) in their review of higher education systems outside Canada.

The value to a university of promoting its mission, purpose, roles, and major changes or additions to its academic programming has been demonstrated in this document. The underlying message in discussion of topics such as university responsiveness, academic planning and traditions, academic development and approval, the role of the university, mission, mandate, and comparison of universities with business and government is the need for a much better understanding of what transpires at a university. The days of a university remaining insular, being an Ivory Tower, have gone. Calls for accountability cannot be left unanswered. Promotion of the accomplishments of universities could assist to further the understanding of their roles. Such measures can strengthen autonomy because individuals external to the university may obtain an improved understanding and realize that autonomy is not easy to abuse.

Responsiveness: Views Through a Perceptual Lens

This study provided perceptions of university responsiveness. The information obtained explained that many factors influence academic development and approval processes. These factors control in many ways the extent of responsiveness displayed by universities. Also, as noted in the study, the degree of responsiveness fluctuates depending on the varying perspectives of individual and collective stakeholders as portrayed in Figure 7.1.

For the most part, the development and approval processes within universities, described in Figure 2.3, have remained the same over recent years, at least in Canada (Watson, 1992). However, the suitability of the processes are viewed in different ways by different constituencies. Although the processes are thorough, academics at

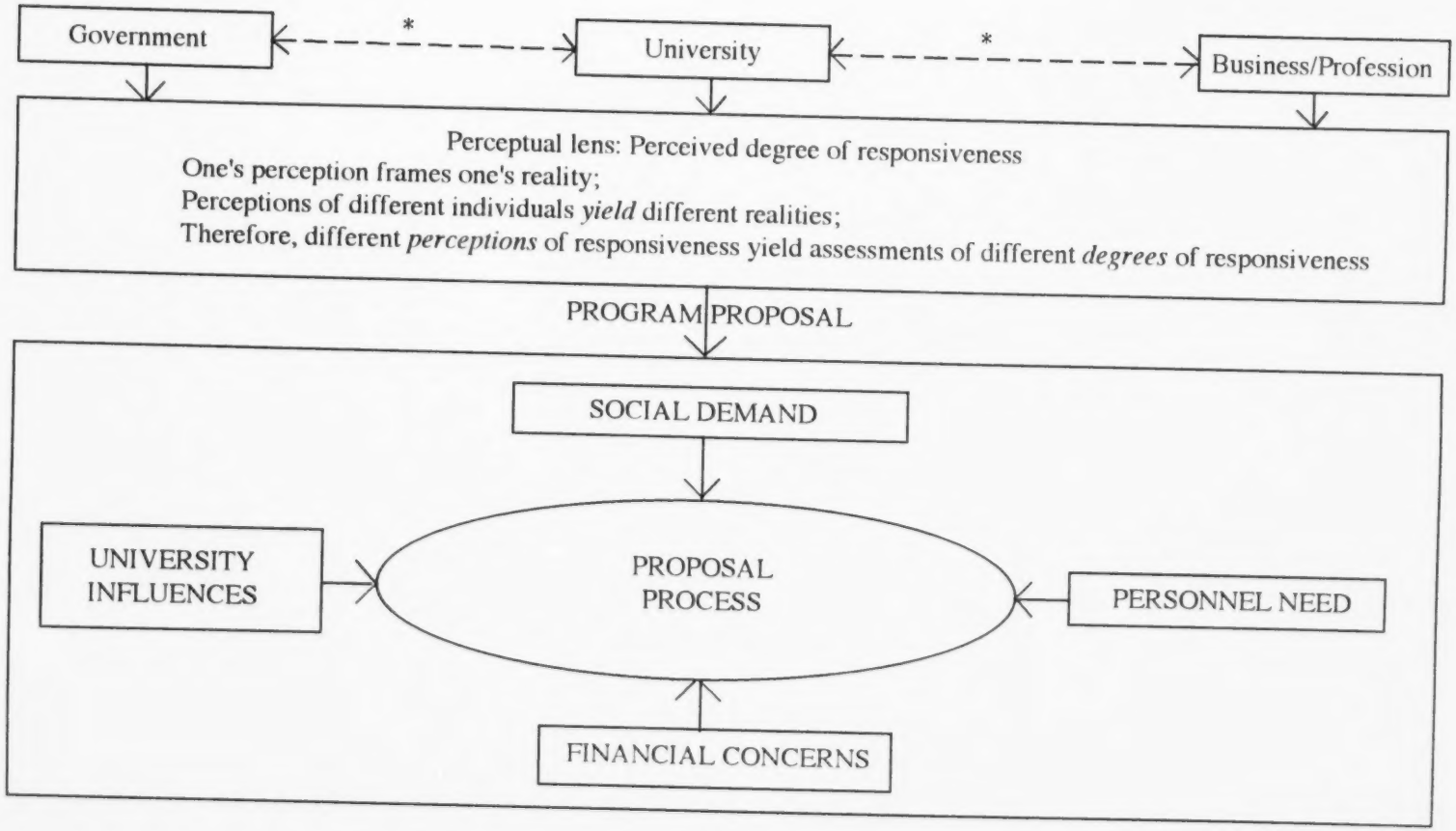

Figure 7.1 Responsiveness as viewed through a perceptual lens

* indicates potential for interaction

universities should realize that external stakeholders can view the procedures as overly slow. Howard Clark (1995, January 17), President of Dalhousie University, stated in a radio interview that university decision making has been at a glacial pace and now is the time for the word *evolutionary* to be changed to *revolutionary*. Also, external stakeholders should realize that an increased pace of program development and approval can only occur if academic freedom and autonomy continue to be respected. Meshing the two principles--efficiency of process with traditions of academic freedom and autonomy-- remains an arduous, but not impossible, task.

Figure 2.2 outlines the factors which influence the development and approval processes for academic programs at universities. Based on information provided from this study, each of the three groups of external stakeholders shown at the top of Figure 7.1 perceives each factor differently. Only the headings of these factors, more completely delineated in Figure 2.2, are included in Figure 7.1.

Perceptions of individuals pertaining to the viability, need, and compatibility of a certain factor frame their sense of reality--beliefs and values--related to that aspect of the process. It then follows that the perception by different individuals could lead to different senses of reality. Therefore, the summary statement which describes the information gathered from this study is that the various perceptions of responsiveness held by different stakeholders yield assessments of different degrees of responsiveness.

Thus, the term "perceptual lens" was purposely chosen to emphasize how different constituents view responsiveness. Metaphorically speaking, the academics may view their degree of responsiveness through a somewhat positive and affirming rose-colored lens. However, the external constituents--government and business/professions--may characterize responsiveness of universities through different colored lenses and perhaps see the rose-colored lenses of the faculty members

in a pejorative sense. The external stakeholders may be more absolute in their thinking and may believe that universities are not totally responsive. Awareness of the contextual frameworks from which each of the three identified constituencies in this study operate may assist in greater mutual understanding among them.

External Agency: Successful Program Approval Suggestions

When an external agency such as a business or profession wishes to have an academic program developed and approved by a university, several factors must be considered. As illustrated in Figure 2.3 and discussed elsewhere, most of the initial development and approval occurs at the departmental level. Professors interviewed for the study provided other strategies to enable an externally advocated program to be approved and implemented. Thus, if an external group were advocating an academic program at a university, what measures would it have to take to achieve success?

1. Find a spokesperson with credibility in the academic community of the specific unit and within the university, especially one who commands respect outside the unit that is proposing the program.

2. Determine whether an entirely new program is required or if modification of an existing program would suffice.

3. Manage the publicity and information flow in a way that draws attention of a university's senior administration and government officials to the need for such a program.

4. Collaborate within planning units within the university.

5. Realize that it is a political process, so that one has to consider sound political strategies both for internal university negotiations and negotiations with government officials.

6. Obtain support from the provincial and national association as well as other allied bodies.

7. Prepare a cost analysis of the program. Identify others means of financial support if available.

8. Realize that the process is long with the mean time for program development and approval being 2.5 years.

Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn. These statements also synthesize the major contributions to knowledge made by this study.

1. Perceptions vary among stakeholders on the degree of responsiveness of universities in meeting societal needs through the content of their academic programs.

2. The degree to which academic units within a university, and thus the university itself, are responsive is determined to a considerable extent by the amount of financial support available.

3. Decisions on the viability of and need for an academic program are usually made in a collegial manner at the department level. As the proposal is passed through the various committees through to the general faculties councils and boards of governors who make the final decisions, the chances of gaining approval increase.

4 (a). Communication of the University's mission statement, although deemed very important, is not effectively undertaken.

4 (b). Notwithstanding the noted importance of a university mission statement, the linkage is often weak between a university's mission statement and its direct application to academic planning. Thus it is not often considered in the day-to-day academic planning at the departmental level.

5. The importance placed upon each criterion used in assessing academic program proposals varies among the categories of individuals involved in the assessment. The VPA and CHEF respondents often had diverging assessments on the perceived importance of the same criterion. For example, for the criterion of ensuring

that the "Program meets the curricular needs of the various businesses and industries (i.e., provides specialized skills and knowledge), " the rankings for this item were 33rd out of 39 for the VPAs and third out of 18 for the CHEF respondents, respectively. Further, throughout the interviews at the University, a common theme which evolved was that a university education may not necessarily be designed to procure a career upon graduation.

6. The University of Alberta has been responsive between 1988 and 1993 as demonstrated by its adoption of new programs during that time period. Also, the University has been responsive through other measures such as establishing formal committees to interact with external agencies.

7. In general, the University's roles, complexities, and differences in operational and philosophical culture are neither well known nor well understood by external agencies and the public at large.

8. Although faculty members in this study believed the University to be responsive, the term "responsiveness" is difficult to define and can have different meanings depending upon the context. The term could be considered to be on a continuum from "being reflexive to being compassionate."

9. Most new program ideas originate internally. However, an increasing trend exists in university academic planning to use more input and support from external stakeholders.

10. External agencies such as businesses and professions wishing to encourage a specified new academic proposal must understand that it is a collegial, political, and slow process to approval, and must work within those confines.

11. Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development (AAECD) Department has both a legislative and fiduciary role to play at universities but not an academic planning role.

12. The jurisdictional relationship among faculty associations, general faculties councils (senates outside Alberta and Saskatchewan), and boards of governors with respect to assessing new academic programs or major revisions to existing programs has remained the same over time from an operational or structural perspective. However, there are concerns among the interviewed academics about the motives and directions of the senior administration in the University of Alberta's recent policy initiatives.

Recommendations

These additional studies are proposed based on findings from this research:

1. A comparative study of planning and development processes in universities, some businesses, and some governments would identify the unique aspects of universities' methods.

2. A study to determine ways in which universities might become more aware of and responsive to the stated needs of constituents external to these institutions would assist in identifying the degree of responsiveness of universities.

3. An assessment by universities of the strengths and weaknesses of their procedures for dealing with new academic proposals would further assist in determining to what degree universities are responsive. However, a balance between responsiveness and program credibility must be maintained.

Further considerations based on findings from the study are as follows:

1. Delineating the concept of "responsiveness," which has a multitude of meanings, could assist in understanding this term as it is used extensively when academic programming is being discussed.

2. Examining the perceived change of status of faculty members when they become senior administration officials could assist in understanding the thoughts and sometimes mistrust of faculty members for their "former colleagues."

3. Improved communication of university mission statements to external agencies could help to develop a more complete understanding of the institutions' structure and functioning.

4. Devising improved ways whereby the universities may hear the needs of constituents external to the university could help to define new terms of reference for academic change. The potential exists for both external stakeholders and universities to be either partners or victims in university programming changes.

5. Governments should realize that the degree of university responsiveness is directly related to the annual amount of funding upon which these institutions can rely.

Final Comments

The report by the Nova Scotia Council of Higher Education in October 1994 provided further insight into the findings of this study. It stated that the needs of society must influence higher education but that "the frequent inaccuracy of labour-market predictions and the dangers of allowing society to have dictatorial powers over universities must be noted" (p. 8). It also identified the importance of maintaining the balance needed in the relationship which universities have with their external constituents: "To tie funding to the moving target of social opinion may be a frustrating as well as expensive proposition. Equally, institutions which benefit significantly from public funds must be open and responsive to society's legitimate interests and concerns" (p. 8). Finally, the report noted that as universities seek to ascertain their role in a changing society, they "must avoid the extremes of embracing every passing fad and equally resisting the impact of all forms of societal change" (pp. 8-9) and they must steer a middle course.

In order to improve our understanding of responsiveness, as discussed in the Nova Scotia report, and to assist universities in their academic planning processes and achievement of their missions, further research on these institutions of higher

education should be conducted. A study to develop greater reciprocity in understanding among internal and external constituents is needed for two reasons. First, a greater appreciation of the tenets and traditions of academia (e.g., academic freedom, autonomy, and tenure) is essential for external agencies. Second, coupled with this awareness, a more responsive inclination by academics to receive input from these external agencies could generate mutual rapport among all stakeholders.

Higher education systems and philosophies are in an age of transformation. However, using precedents afforded by a historical perspective, the changes presently being sought could be considered *evolutionary* on the one hand or *revolutionary* on the other. The current debate pertaining to responsiveness of a university as demonstrated by its academic programs is of long standing and shows no sign of abating. Academics have always been considered experts within their own disciplines and specialties--identifying and indeed creating trends, and providing social critique. Now they must become experts within their scholarly profession and identify and perhaps adapt to the changes which are occurring within universities.

In the modern context, changes continue to occur within the walls of the "Ivory Tower." These walls can be seen on the one hand as either cracking or crumbling, or on the other hand as opening. Are they fissures or portals? Are they threats or opportunities? Answers to these questions depend on how the observers--all the stakeholders interested in university academic programs--perceive the ever-evolving structural and operational styles within universities.

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APPENDIX A

Cover Letter for Vice-Presidents (Academic)

Questionnaire for Vice-Presidents (Academic)

Cover Letter for Vice-Presidents (Academic)

Dear :

Mr. Jim MacLeod, a faculty member at Acadia University, and I are investigating academic planning processes at universities. We are undertaking this research because decision making and strategic planning have become of greater importance as universities consider the need for both program change and adoption of new program proposals to serve the expanding and demanding needs of modern society.

Our purpose in contacting you is to seek **your perceptions** of two aspects of university academic planning: (a) the responsiveness of your institution's academic planners for new programs and major revisions to existing programs and (b) the importance of each of the selected academic criteria chosen for the study.

The information from the study will provide greater understanding of interactions among higher education stakeholders. The data collected will be aggregated and individuals will not be identified. Space at the end of the form is provided for your additional comments. The information from the study will provide an opportunity for a greater understanding of the interactions among all the higher education stakeholders.

Please visualize the university **as a whole** in making your judgments.

The reply envelope has a number on it which shall be used to allow us to know who has replied. However, no identifying information as to respondent will be placed on any questionnaire, so anonymity and confidentiality will be assured.

A summary report will be sent to all respondents.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

E. A. Holdaway
Professor

Questionnaire for Vice-Presidents (Academic)

University Academic Planning

Introduction

I am seeking **your perceptions** of two aspects of university academic planning. First, to what extent are university academic planners perceived to be responsive to demands, originating either internally or externally, for the introduction of new academic programs and revisions to existing programs? Second, how important should each of the selected academic criteria chosen for the study be?

The term **"educational or academic planners"** refers to the faculty members on the "academic development" committee which prioritizes and approves academic changes within universities. In general, the term "**responsiveness"** can refer to two aspects (a) expediency of response, and (b) whether criteria are met. However, in the context of this study, **responsiveness** refers to the latter -- the degree to which these selected criteria are met by the planners throughout the planning process.

Please visualize the university **as a whole** in making your judgments.

In the questions posed below please <u>circle</u> the appropriate number. N/O indicates No Opinion. After each section, space has been allotted for your comments.

1. Not at all 2. A little 3. Moderate extent 4. Considerable extent 5. A great deal 9. N/O

For example:

A. In your opinion, to what extent do academic planners at university currently perform each of the following activities when **assessing** proposals for either new or substantially altered programs? **B.** In your opinion, how **important should** each of the following activities be when **developing** either new or substantially altered programs?	**A. Current behavior of universities.** Not at all / A little / Moderate extent / Considerable extent / A great deal / N/O	**B. How important should these be?** Not at all / A little / Moderate importance / Considerable importance / A great deal / N/O
1. Know the first names of all students	1 (2) 3 4 5 | 9	1 2 3 4 (5) | 9

A. In your opinion, to what extent do academic planners at your university currently perform each of the following activities when **assessing** proposals for either new or substantially altered programs? **B.** In your opinion, how **important should** each of the following activities be when **developing** either new or substantially altered programs?	**A. Current behavior of universities.** Not at all / A little / Moderate extent / Considerable extent / A great deal / N/O						**B. How important should these be?** Not at all / A little / Moderate importance / Considerable importance / Great importance / N/O					
1. Accept proposals for academic change	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
2. Take significant programmatic risks	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
3. Realize the need for contemporary changes	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
4. Manage a realistic timeline for a new program to proceed from planning initiation through to program implementation stage	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
5. Monitor an efficient approval path through the university's academic planning structure	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9

Your comments on the planning components listed in this section:

A1
A2
A3

A. To what extent do your academic planners currently ensure, when **assessing** proposals for either new or substantially altered programs, that the proposed curriculum places emphasis on each of the following criteria? **B.** In you opinion, how **important should** each of the following be when **developing** either new or substantially altered programs?	**A. Current behavior of universities.** Not at all / A little / Moderate extent / Considerable extent / A great deal / N/O						**B. How important should these be?** Not at all / A little / Moderate importance / Considerable importance / Great importance / N/O					
6. Includes general education components, (e.g., arts and science courses, social and philosophical analysis)	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
7. Covers a range of learning skills (e.g., critical thinking, communicating thoughts, problem solving)	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
8. Offers enhanced opportunity to further develop some of these learning skills	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
9. Has sufficient courses in the major field or discipline	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
10. Provides the opportunity for sufficient electives	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
11. Reflects interests of faculty member(s)	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
12. Reflects academic needs of students	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
13. Provides a balance of faculty interests and student academic needs	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
14. Differentiates new program content from existing content	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9

Your comments on the planning components listed in this section:

B1.
B2
B3.

A. To what extent do your university academic planners currently perform each of the following functions when **assessing** proposals for either new or substantially altered programs? **B.** In your opinion, how **important should** each of the following functions be when **developing** proposals for either new or substantially altered programs?	**A. Current behavior of universities.** Not at all / A little / Moderate extent / Considerable extent / A great deal / N/O	**B. How important should these be?** Not at all / A little / Moderate importance / Considerable importance / Great importance / N/O
15. Evaluate support services for the proposed program (e.g., library, laboratories/equipment, physical plant, computer facilities)	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
16. Assess financial support for initiation of the proposed program	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
17. Assess financial support for continuation of the proposed program	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
18. Evaluate faculty expertise needed to implement the proposed program	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
19. Assess teaching load of the faculty after proposed program begins	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9
20. Assess research load of the faculty after program proposed begins	1 2 3 4 5 9	1 2 3 4 5 9

Your comments on the planning components listed in this section:

C1.
C2.
C3.

A. To what extent do your academic planners currently ensure, when **assessing** proposals for either new or substantially altered programs, that the proposed program places emphasis on each of the following criteria? **B.** In your opinion, how **important should** each of the following criteria be when **developing** either new or substantially altered programs?	**A. Current behavior of universities.** Not at all / A little / Moderate extent / Considerable extent / A great deal / N/O						**B. How important should these be?** Not at all / A little / Moderate importance / Considerable importance / Great importance / N/O					
21. Fits with the mission of the university	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
22. Fits with the needs and requirements of the relevant scholarly disciplines	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
23. Fits with the priorities and policies of the provincial government	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
24. Meets the curricular needs of the various professions (i.e., provides specialized skills and knowledge)	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
25. Meets the employment needs of the various professions (i.e., provides a suitable number of graduates)	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
26. Meets the curricular needs of the various businesses and industries (i.e., provides specialized skills and knowledge)	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
27. Meets the employment needs of the various businesses and industries (i.e., provides a suitable number of graduates)	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
28. Meets students' needs for personal academic development	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9

Your comments on the planning components listed in this section:

D1.
D2

A. To what extent do your university academic planners currently perform each of the following functions when **assessing** proposals for either new or substantially altered programs? **B.** In your opinion, how **important should** each of the following functions be when **developing** proposals for either new or substantially altered programs?	**A. Current behavior of universities.** Not at all	A little	Moderate extent	Considerable extent	A great deal	N/O	**B. How important should these be?** Not at all	A little	Moderate importance	Considerable importance	Great importance	N/O
29. Oversee a formalized needs assessment process	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
30. Relate the new program to other campus programs	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
31. Identify similar programs at other institutions	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
32. Assess present demand for students	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
33. Assess projected demand for students	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9

Your comments on the planning components listed in this section:

E1
E2
E3

A. In your opinion, to what extent do academic planners at your university listen to each of the following stakeholders when **assessing** proposals for either new or substantially altered programs? **B.** In your opinion, how **important should** it be to obtain information from each of the following stakeholders when **developing** proposals for new or substantially altered programs?	**A. Current behavior of universities.** Not at all / A little / Moderate extent / Considerable extent / A great deal / N/O						**B. How important should these be?** Not at all / A little / Moderate importance / Considerable importance / Great importance / N/O					
34. Faculty members	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
35. Students	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
36. Professionals in the university's geographic locality	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
37. Businesses in the university's geographic locality	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
38. Provincial government officials	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
39. Public at large	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9

Your comments on the planning components listed in this section:

F1
F2
F3

Concluding comments:

As outlined in the introduction to this form, I am seeking **your perceptions** of two aspects of university academic planning. First, to what extent are university academic planners perceived to be responsive to demands, originating either internally or externally, for the introduction of new academic programs and revisions to existing programs? Second, how important should each of the selected academic criteria chosen for the study be? The following space is for any additional comments you may wish to make.

Background Characteristics

The purpose of this section is to identify professional and personal background traits of the respondents. The data collected will be aggregated and will not be identified by individual responses. Please **circle** the appropriate response for each item.

1. What term *best* describes you? (Please circle.)

1. University administrator
2. Businessperson
3. Professional (e.g., physician, lawyer, accountant)

Please state your age (in years). _____

2. Are you now or have you ever served on an academic planning committee within an university?

1. Yes ; **2.** No

If "yes", how many years have you served? (Count current year as a full year)

_____ years

At what level did the committee operate?
1. Department; **2.** Faculty; **3.** Senate (or GFC); **4.** Board; **5.** Other

3. As a point of reference, what is the most appropriate category of university to which are you referring? Circle <u>one</u> only:

1. the university where you obtained your first degree

2. the university where you obtained your most recent degree

3. the university where you presently are employed

4. universities in general

4. From your experience, what is your perception of the *average* number of months normally required for a new program to proceed from the proposal stage to the implementation stage?

1. 0-6 months;	**2.** 7-12 months;	**3.** 13-18 months;
4. 19-24 months;	**5.** 25-30 months;	**6.** 31-36 months
7. 37-42 months	**8.** 43-48 months	**9.** 49 + months

APPENDIX B

Cover Letter for Corporate-Higher Education Forum

Questionnaire for Corporate-Higher Education Forum

Cover Letter for Corporate-Higher Education Forum

Dear :

Mr. Jim MacLeod, a faculty member at Acadia University, and I are investigating academic planning processes at universities. We are undertaking this research because decision making and strategic planning have become of greater importance as universities consider the need for both program change and adoption of new program proposals to serve the expanding and demanding needs of modern society. As you are a board member of the *Corporate-Higher Education Forum*, we are seeking your perceptions which are based on knowledge of both business and university needs.

We are asking for **your perceptions** of the following two general aspects of planning. First, what are your perceptions of responsiveness to academic change by university academic planners? Second, what is your opinion about the importance of the criteria used in academic planning?

The information from the study will provide greater understanding of interactions among higher education stakeholders. The data collected will be aggregated and individuals will not be identified. Space at the end of the form is provided for your additional comments. A summary report will be sent to all respondents.

The reply envelope has a number on it which shall be used to allow us to know who has replied. However, no identifying information as to respondent will be placed on any questionnaire, so anonymity and confidentiality will be assured.

Thank you for your assistance with this request. Your opinions will be very useful in defining the contemporary context of university planning.

Yours sincerely,

E.A. Holdaway
Professor

Questionnaire for Corporate-Higher Education Forum

A. In your opinion, to what extent do university planners currently perform the following activities when **assessing** proposals for either new or substantially altered programs? **B.** In your opinion, how **important should** the following activities be when **developing** either new or substantially altered programs? **(N/O means "no opinion" or "undecided")**	**A. Current practices** Not at all / A little / Moderate extent / Considerable extent / A great deal / N/O						**B. Importance** Not at all / A little / Moderate importance / Considerable importance / Great importance / N/O					
EXAMPLE: Know the first names of all students	1	(2)	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	(5)	9
1. Assess present demand by students (i.e., social demand)	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
2. Assess present demand for graduates of the proposed program	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
3. Assess projected demand for graduates of the proposed program	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
4. React to comments for change from business people in the university's geographic locality	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
5. React to comments for change from professionals in the university's geographic locality	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
6. React to comments for change from provincial government officials	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
7. React to comments for change from public at large	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
8. Consider the workload of faculty members	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
9. Ensure that the program fits with the mission of the university	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9

10. Ensure that the program meets the curricular needs of the various businesses, industries, and professions (i.e., it will provide specialized skills and knowledge)	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
11. Ensure that the program meets the personnel needs of the various businesses, industries, and professions (i.e., it will provide a suitable number of graduates)	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
12. Ensure that the program meets the students' needs for development of appropriate skills	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
13. Ensure that the program meets students' needs for personal academic development	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
14. Identify similar programs at other institutions (i.e., redundancy)	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
15. Provide a balance of faculty interests and student academic needs	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
16. Evaluate support services for the proposed program (e.g., library, laboratories/equipment, physical plant, computer facilities)	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
17. Assess financial cost of proposed program	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9
18. Assess financial support for proposed program	1	2	3	4	5	9	1	2	3	4	5	9

Respondent Information

The purpose of this section is to identify professional and personal background traits of the respondents. The data collected will be aggregated and will not be identified by individual responses. Please **circle** the appropriate response for each item.

1. Which term *best* describes you? (Please circle one number)

1. Businessperson
2. Professional (e.g., physician, lawyer, accountant)

2. Are you now or have you ever served on an academic planning committee within an university? **1.** Yes
2. No

If yes, at what level did the committee operate? (Please circle one number)
1. Department **2.** Faculty **3.** Senate (or GFC) **4.** Board **5.** Other

Comments (Please use reverse side if necessary):
The following space is for any additional comments you may wish to make.

APPENDIX C

Questions for deans, department chairs, and faculty members at the University of Alberta

Questions for individuals with senior academic administrative experience from the University of Alberta

Questions for deans, department chairs, and faculty members at the University of Alberta

1. How did the new program proposal evolve? Who provided the impetus for the proposal in the initial stages?

2. What factors determined the need for the program?

3. How was support obtained for the program proposal during the developmental and approval processes:

   (a) from the University of Alberta community?

   (b) from the communities external to the university?

4. Was the proposal opposed at any part of the process? If so, how was this opposition displayed?

5. How long was the process -- from development of the program proposal to approval by the Board of Governors? What factors, if any, delayed the process?

6. How frequently do external agencies request introduction of a new or revised program in your department? How well are such requests received by your department?

7. To what extent should the provincial department of advanced education be involved in academic program development within this university?

8. How effectively has the University of Alberta communicated its mission or raison d'être to the outside communities? How important is it for a university to do so?

9. In your estimation, what should be the appropriate balance between meeting the needs of individuals, employers, and society and developing the academic content offered at universities? Should meeting the needs of the economy, including skills training for employment, help to set priorities for the university?

10. In your opinion, how responsive *are* (a) universities, in general, and (b) the University of Alberta, in particular, in meeting community, professional, and business needs? How responsive *should* they be?

Questions for individuals with senior academic administrative experience from the University of Alberta

1. In your estimation, what should be the appropriate balance between meeting the needs of individuals, employers, and society and developing the academic content offered at universities? Should meeting the needs of the economy, including skills training for employment, help to set priorities for the university?

2. How responsive *are* (a) universities, in general, and (b) the University of Alberta, in particular, in meeting community, professional, and business needs?

3. How responsive *should* universities be, as compared to community colleges, in meeting community and business needs?

4. In your opinion, what *works* in the current university system? Does anything need to be changed? Does anything need to be discarded? Does anything need to be introduced? What actions would best refine the overall responsiveness of university academic planners?

5. In your estimation, what is the average timeline for a new program to proceed from the department level to implementation as a degree program?

6. How effectively has the University of Alberta communicated its mission or its raison d'être to the outside communities? How important is it for a university to do so?

7. To what extent should the provincial department of advanced education be involved in academic program development within this university?

8. How frequent or usual is it for a professional association to request introduction of a new or revised program in a department, school, or faculty?

9. To what extent is information from sources external to the university deemed appropriate, and thus used, when new academic programs and major revisions to existing programs are being reviewed for approval?

10. Which variables have to be considered if a business or a profession wishes to establish a new program or major revisions to an existing program at a university to serve its needs in acquiring qualified personnel upon graduation?

APPENDIX D

Acadia University

Mission Statement and Supporting Objectives

Acadia University

Mission Statement and Supporting Objectives

(As approved by the Board of Governors of Acadia University, 7 May 1994)

Mission Statement

Acadia University is a primarily undergraduate institution providing a liberal education based on the highest standards; a scholarly community that aims to ensure a broadening life experience for its students, faculty, and staff.

Supporting Objectives

1. To attract students of demonstrated intellectual promise whose qualities of mind and character will enable them to contribute to the community of scholarship and to take full advantage of the university's curriculum.

2. To provide a diverse cultural and intellectual environment by attracting students from widely different cultural, geographic, ethnic, and demographic backgrounds.

3. To ensure that the university will not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, gender, culture, or other form of discrimination deemed unacceptable by the university community.

4. To develop resources to ensure that deserving students are not discouraged from attending Acadia University because of personal financial limitations.

5. To attract and maintain faculty and staff, diverse in their backgrounds, committed to excellence in their contribution to the university.

6. To offer academic programs of such depth, breadth, and rigor as to enable students to:
   identify and solve significant problems;
   develop an understanding of the relevance of acquired knowledge;
   enhance curiosity and engender a desire for lifelong learning;
   become creative, critical, and independent thinkers.

7. To ensure excellence in academic programs through the integration and encouragement of teaching, research, and other forms of scholarly activity of the highest standard.

8. To provide for the personal development of students through academic, athletic, culture, organizational, social, and spiritual opportunities.

9. To instill in students a sense of responsibility to seek improvement in the quality of life for all.

10 To provide rigorous graduate programs in selected areas where the university possesses distinctive scholarly and physical resources.

11. To maintain a lifelong relationship with graduates of the university.

12. To create an environment that:
maximizes the creative interaction of students, faculty, and staff;
recognizes the contributions of all members of the community within an atmosphere of mutual respect;
imparts a sense of the traditions and quality of the university.

13. To maintain the nature of a residential campus with emphasis on the quality of that campus life.

14. To recognize the importance of the university to its surrounding community, to promote community service in all areas of the university, and to address regional, national, and international issues.

15. To offer a selection of programs so as to ensure quality and balance in the university's offerings.

16. To monitor continuously the university's success in attaining its mission, to take corrective action where appropriate, and to implement, guided by measures of quality, initiatives in pursuit of these goals.

APPENDIX E

TABLES

AE.1 Means of Responses for Each of the 39 Questions Asked of Vice-Presidents (Academic) About Both the Current Level and Importance of Activity in Assessing Criteria for Academic Program Proposals

AE.2 Means of Responses for Each of the 39 Questions Asked of Vice-Presidents (Academic) About the Current Level of Activity in Assessing Criteria for Academic Program Proposals

AE.3 Means of Responses for Each of the 39 Questions Asked of Vice-Presidents (Academic) About the Importance of Activity in Assessing Criteria for Academic Program Proposals

AE.4 Means of Responses for Each of the 18 Questions Asked of CHEF Members About Both the Current Level and Importance of Activity in Assessing Criteria for Academic Program Proposals

AE.5 Means of Responses for Each of the 18 Questions Asked of CHEF Members About the Current Level of Activity in Assessing Criteria for Academic Program Proposals

AE.6 Means of Responses for Each of the 18 Questions Asked of CHEF Members About the Importance of Activity in Assessing Criteria for Academic Program Proposals

Table AE.1

Means of Responses for Each of the 39 Questions Asked of Vice-Presidents (Academic) About Both the Current Level and Importance of Activity in Assessing Criteria for Academic Program Proposals

Activity	Current level of activity		Importance of activity	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Academic planners consider input from faculty members	4.50	1	4.27	10
Program has sufficient courses in the major field or discipline	4.15	2	3.88	20
Program reflects academic needs of students	4.09	3	4.62	3
Academic planners evaluate faculty expertise needed to implement the proposed program	3.94	4.5	4.47	6
Academic planners accept proposals for academic change	3.94	4.5	4.34	7
Academic planners assess financial support for initiation of the proposed program	3.79	7	4.70	1
Academic planners ensure program fits with the needs and requirements of the relevant scholarly disciplines	3.79	7	4.03	16.5
Program reflects interests of faculty member(s)	3.79	7	3.21	34
Program meets the curricular needs of the various professions (i.e., provides specialized skills and knowledge)	3.76	9	3.78	24
Academic planners relate the new program to other campus programs	3.68	10	4.21	11
Academic planners assess financial support for continuation of the proposed program	3.67	11	4.64	2
Academic planners ensure program fits with the mission of the university	3.62	12	4.49	5

Table AE.1 (continued)

Activity	Current level of activity		Importance of activity	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Academic planners realize the need for contemporary changes	3.59	13	4.52	4
Program includes general education components, (e.g., arts and science courses, social and philosophical analysis)	3.55	14	4.03	16.5
Academic planners evaluate support services for the proposed program (e.g., library, laboratories/equipment, physical plant, computer facilities)	3.53	15	4.29	8
Program provides the opportunity for sufficient electives	3.46	16	3.78	24
Academic planners differentiate new program content from existing content	3.38	17	3.78	24
Provides a balance of faculty interests and student academic needs	3.36	18	3.76	26
Academic planners monitor an efficient approval path through the university's academic planning structure	3.33	19	4.16	14.5
Program meets students' needs for personal academic development	3.27	20	4.16	14.5
Academic planners manage a realistic timeline for a new program to proceed from planning initiation through to program implementation stage	3.21	21	4.18	13
Program covers a range of learning skills (e.g., critical thinking, communicating thoughts, problem solving)	3.18	22	4.28	9
Academic planners assess present demand for students	3.18	23	3.85	22
Program offers enhanced opportunity to further develop some of these learning skills	3.12	24	4.19	12

Table AE.1 (continued)

Activity	Current level of activity		Importance of activity	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Academic planners assess projected demand for students	3.12	25	3.97	18.5
Academic planners identify similar programs at other institutions	3.12	26	3.71	27
Academic planners consider input from students	3.06	27	3.97	18.5
Program meets the employment needs of the various professions (i.e., provides a suitable number of graduates)	3.03	28	3.42	30.5
Program meets the curricular needs of the various businesses and industries (i.e., provides specialized skills and knowledge)	2.94	29	3.31	33
Academic planners consider input from professionals in the university's geographic locality	2.84	30	3.42	30.5
Academic planners assess teaching load of the faculty after proposed program begins	2.82	31	3.87	21
Academic planners take significant programmatic risks	2.68	32	3.53	29
Program meets the employment needs of the various businesses and industries (i.e., provides a suitable number of graduates)	2.61	33	3.16	35
Academic planners assess research load of the faculty after proposed program begins	2.55	34	3.40	32
Academic planners consider input from businesses in the university's geographic locality	2.49	35	3.00	36
Academic planners oversee a formalized needs assessment process	2.41	36	3.70	28

Table AE.1 (continued)

Activity	Current level of activity		Importance of activity	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Academic planners consider input from provincial government officials	2.38	37	2.81	38
Academic planners ensure program fits with the priorities and policies of the provincial government	2.35	38	2.85	37
Academic planners consider input from public at large	1.94	39	2.68	39
Mean of means*	3.27		3.86	

Notes : 1. The scale for *Current level of assessing criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Considerable extent; 5 = A great deal; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. The scale for *Importance of criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate importance; 4 = Considerable importance; 5 = Great importance; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

3. * Mean of means = mean of responses of vice-presidents (academic) for all of the 39 questionnaire items.

Table AE.2

Means of Responses for Each of the 39 Questions Asked of Vice-Presidents (Academic) About the Current Level of Activity in Assessing Criteria for Academic Program Proposals

Activity	Current level of activity			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Academic planners consider input from faculty members	4.50	0.51	1	34
Program has sufficient courses in the major field or discipline	4.15	0.76	2	33
Program reflects academic needs of students	4.09	0.71	3	34
Academic planners evaluate faculty expertise needed to implement the proposed program	3.94	0.92	4.5	34
Academic planners accept proposals for academic change	3.94	0.81	4.5	34
Academic planners assess financial support for initiation of the proposed program	3.79	1.19	7	33
Academic planners ensure program fits with the needs and requirements of the relevant scholarly disciplines	3.79	0.74	7	33
Program reflects interests of faculty member(s)	3.79	1.04	7	34
Program meets the curricular needs of the various professions (i.e., provides specialized skills and knowledge)	3.76	0.83	9	33
Academic planners relate the new program to other campus programs	3.68	0.84	10	34
Academic planners assess financial support for continuation of the proposed program	3.67	1.11	11	33
Academic planners ensure program fits with the mission of the university	3.62	0.89	12	34
Academic planners realize the need for contemporary changes	3.59	0.93	13	34
Program includes general education components, (e.g., arts and science courses, social and philosophical analysis)	3.55	0.93	14	31
Academic planners evaluate support services for the proposed program (e.g., library, laboratories/equipment, physical plant, computer facilities)	3.53	0.86	15	34

Table AE.2 (continued)

Activity	Current level of activity			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Program provides the opportunity for sufficient electives	3.46	0.83	16	33
Academic planners differentiate new program content from existing content	3.38	0.94	17	32
Provides a balance of faculty interests and student academic needs	3.36	0.78	18	33
Academic planners monitor an efficient approval path through the university's academic planning structure	3.33	1.02	19	33
Program meets students' needs for personal academic development	3.27	1.02	20	34
Academic planners manage a realistic timeline for a new program to proceed from planning initiation through to program implementation stage	3.21	0.78	21	33
Program covers a range of learning skills (e.g., critical thinking, communicating thoughts, problem solving)	3.18	0.95	22.5	31
Academic planners assess present demand for students	3.18	1.06	22.5	34
Program offers enhanced opportunity to further develop some of these learning skills	3.12	0.86	25	33
Academic planners assess projected demand for students	3.12	1.07	25	34
Academic planners identify similar programs at other institutions	3.12	1.09	25	34
Academic planners consider input from students	3.06	0.92	27	34
Program meets the employment needs of the various professions (i.e., provides a suitable number of graduates)	3.03	0.97	28	32
Program meets the curricular needs of the various businesses and industries (i.e., provides specialized skills and knowledge)	2.94	1.06	29	33
Academic planners consider input from professionals in the university's geographic locality	2.84	0.88	30	32
Academic planners assess teaching load of the faculty after proposed program begins	2.82	1.26	31	33

Table AE.2 (continued)

Activity	Current level of activity			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Academic planners take significant programmatic risks	2.68	0.95	32	31
Program meets the employment needs of the various businesses and industries (i.e., provides a suitable number of graduates)	2.61	1.03	33	33
Academic planners assess research load of the faculty after proposed program begins	2.55	1.15	34	31
Academic planners consider input from businesses in the university's geographic locality	2.49	0.97	35	33
Academic planners oversee a formalized needs assessment process	2.41	1.01	36	32
Academic planners consider input from provincial government officials	2.38	1.24	37	32
Academic planners ensure program fits with the priorities and policies of the provincial government	2.35	0.95	38	33
Academic planners consider input from public at large	1.94	0.77	39	31
Mean of means*	3.27	0.43	___	___

Notes: 1. The scale for *Current level of assessing criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Considerable extent; 5 = A great deal; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. * Mean of means = mean of responses of vice-presidents (academic) for all of the 39 questionnaire items.

Table AE.3

Means of Responses for Each of the 39 Questions Asked of Vice-Presidents (Academic) About the Importance of Activity in Assessing Criteria for Academic Program Proposals

Activity	Importance of activity			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Academic planners assess financial support for initiation of the proposed program	4.70	0.59	1	33
Academic planners assess financial support for continuation of the proposed program	4.64	0.60	2	33
Program reflects academic needs of students	4.62	0.55	3	34
Academic planners realize the need for contemporary changes	4.52	0.71	4	33
Academic planners ensure program fits with the mission of the university	4.49	0.67	5	33
Academic planners evaluate faculty expertise needed to implement the proposed program	4.47	0.56	6	34
Academic planners accept proposals for academic change	4.34	0.70	7	32
Academic planners evaluate support services for the proposed program (e.g., library, laboratories/equipment, physical plant, computer facilities)	4.29	0.58	8	34
Program covers a range of learning skills (e.g., critical thinking, communicating thoughts, problem solving)	4.28	0.81	9	32
Academic planners consider input from faculty members	4.27	0.67	10	34
Academic planners relate the new program to other campus programs	4.21	0.69	11	33
Program offers enhanced opportunity to further develop some of these learning skills	4.19	0.69	12	32
Academic planners manage a realistic timeline for a new program to proceed from planning initiation through to program implementation stage	4.18	0.63	13	34
Academic planners monitor an efficient approval path through the university's academic planning structure	4.16	0.68	14.5	32

Table AE.3 (continued)

Activity	Importance of activity			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Program meets students' needs for personal academic development	4.16	0.72	14.5	32
Academic planners ensure program fits with the needs and requirements of the relevant scholarly disciplines	4.03	0.77	16.5	33
Program includes general education components, (e.g., arts and science courses, social and philosophical analysis)	4.03	0.90	16.5	32
Academic planners assess projected demand for students	4.00	0.76	18	34
Academic planners consider input from students	3.97	0.76	19	34
Program has sufficient courses in the major field or discipline	3.88	0.78	20	33
Academic planners assess teaching load of the faculty after proposed program begins	3.87	1.04	21	30
Academic planners assess present demand for students	3.85	0.78	22	34
Program meets the curricular needs of the various professions (i.e., provides specialized skills and knowledge)	3.78	1.04	24	32
Program provides the opportunity for sufficient electives	3.78	0.61	24	32
Academic planners differentiate new program content from existing content	3.78	0.83	24	32
Provides a balance of faculty interests and student academic needs	3.76	0.75	26	33
Academic planners identify similar programs at other institutions	3.71	0.91	27	34
Academic planners oversee a formalized needs assessment process	3.70	0.84	28	30
Academic planners take significant programmatic risks	3.53	0.82	29	30
Program meets the employment needs of the various professions (i.e., provides a suitable number of graduates)	3.42	0.87	30.5	33

Table AE.3 (continued)

Activity	Importance of activity			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Academic planners consider input from professionals in the university's geographic locality	3.42	0.85	30.5	31
Academic planners assess research load of the faculty after proposed program begins	3.40	1.04	32	30
Program meets the curricular needs of the various businesses and industries (i.e., provides specialized skills and knowledge)	3.31	0.97	33	32
Program reflects interests of faculty member(s)	3.21	0.91	34	34
Program meets the employment needs of the various businesses and industries (i.e., provides a suitable number of graduates)	3.16	0.88	35	32
Academic planners consider input from businesses in the university's geographic locality	3.00	0.98	36	32
Academic planners ensure program fits with the priorities and policies of the provincial government	2.85	0.94	37	33
Academic planners consider input from provincial government officials	2.81	1.03	38	32
Academic planners consider input from public at large	2.68	0.75	39	31
Mean of means*	3.86	0.33	___	___

Notes: 1. The scale for *Importance of criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate importance; 4 = Considerable importance; 5 = Great importance; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. * Mean of means = mean of responses of vice-presidents (academic) for all of the 39 questionnaire items.

Table AE.4

Means of Responses for Each of the 18 Questions Asked of CHEF Members About Both the Current Level and Importance of Activity in Assessing Criteria for Academic Program Proposals

Activity	Current level of activity		Importance of activity	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Consider the workload of faculty members	4.00	1	3.33	15
Assess financial cost of proposed program	3.69	2	4.24	1
Assess financial support for proposed program	3.63	3	4.00	5.5
Ensure that the program fits with the mission of the university	3.47	4.5	3.83	7
Ensure that the program meets students' needs for personal academic development	3.47	4.5	3.78	8.5
Obtain information from provincial government officials	3.44	6	2.67	18
Evaluate support services for the proposed program (e.g., library, laboratories/equipment, physical plant, computer facilities)	3.38	7	3.71	10
Provide a balance of faculty interests and student academic needs	3.00	8	3.56	11
Assess present demand by students (i.e., social demand)	2.88	9	3.50	12.5
Ensure that the program meets the students' needs for development of appropriate skills	2.77	10	4.22	2
Ensure that the program meets the curricular needs of the various businesses, industries, and professions (i.e., it will provide specialized skills and knowledge)	2.71	11	4.17	3
Assess present demand for graduates of the proposed program	2.65	12	3.50	12.5

Table AE.4 (continued)

Activity	Current level of activity		Importance of activity	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Obtain information from professionals in the university's geographic locality	2.63	13	3.47	14
Obtain information from business people in the university's geographic locality	2.47	14	3.28	16.5
Identify similar programs at other institutions (i.e., redundancy)	2.43	15	4.06	4
Assess projected demand for graduates of the proposed program	2.38	16.5	4.00	5.5
Obtain information from public at large	2.38	16.5	3.28	16.5
Ensure that the program meets the personnel needs of the various businesses, industries, and professions (i.e., it will provide a suitable number of graduates)	2.24	18	3.78	8.5
Mean of means*	2.98		3.69	

Notes: 1. The scale for *Current level of assessing criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Considerable extent; 5 = A great deal; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. The scale for *Importance of criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate importance; 4 = Considerable importance; 5 = Great importance; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

3. * Mean of means = mean of responses of CHEF members for all 18 questionnaire items.

Table AE.5

Means of Responses for Each of the 18 Questions Asked of CHEF Members About the Current Level of Activity in Assessing Criteria for Academic Program Proposals

Activity of academic planners	Current level of criteria assessment			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Consider the workload of faculty members	4.00	0.63	1	16
Assess financial cost of proposed program	3.69	1.01	2	16
Assess financial support for proposed program	3.63	0.81	3	16
Ensure that the program fits with the mission of the university	3.47	1.01	4.5	17
Ensure that the program meets students' needs for personal academic development	3.47	0.96	4.5	17
Obtain information from provincial government officials	3.44	0.82	6	16
Evaluate support services for the proposed program (e.g., library, laboratories/equipment, physical plant, computer facilities)	3.38	1.03	7	16
Provide a balance of faculty interests and student academic needs	3.00	0.97	8	16
Assess present demand by students (i.e., social demand)	2.88	0.62	9	16
Ensure that the program meets the students' needs for development of appropriate skills	2.77	0.75	10	17
Ensure that the program meets the curricular needs of the various businesses, industries, and professions (i.e., it will provide specialized skills and knowledge)	2.71	0.69	11	17
Assess present demand for graduates of the proposed program	2.65	0.79	12	17
Obtain information from professionals in the university's geographic locality	2.63	0.62	13	16

Table AE.5 (continued)

Activity of academic planners	Current level of criteria assessment			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Obtain information from business people in the university's geographic locality	2.47	0.51	14	17
Identify similar programs at other institutions (i.e., redundancy)	2.43	0.65	15	14
Assess projected demand for graduates of the proposed program	2.38	0.50	16.5	16
Obtain information from public at large	2.38	0.87	16.5	16
Ensure that the program meets the personnel needs of the various businesses, industries, and professions (i.e., it will provide a suitable number of graduates)	2.24	0.44	18	17
Mean of means*	2.98	0.38	—	—

Notes: 1. The scale for *Current level of assessing criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Considerable extent; 5 = A great deal; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. * Mean of means = mean of responses of CHEF members for all 18 questionnaire items.

Table AE.6

Means of Responses for Each of the 18 Questions Asked of CHEF Members About the Importance of Activity in Assessing Criteria for Academic Program Proposals

Activity of academic planners	Importance of activity			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Assess financial cost of proposed program	4.24	0.66	1	17
Ensure that the program meets the students' needs for development of appropriate skills	4.22	0.55	2	18
Ensure that the program meets the curricular needs of the various businesses, industries, and professions (i.e., it will provide specialized skills and knowledge)	4.17	0.62	3	18
Identify similar programs at other institutions (i.e., redundancy)	4.06	0.93	4	16
Assess financial support for proposed program	4.00	0.71	5.5	17
Assess projected demand for graduates of the proposed program	4.00	0.97	5.5	18
Ensure that the program fits with the mission of the university	3.83	0.92	7	18
Ensure that the program meets students' needs for personal academic development	3.78	0.65	8.5	18
Ensure that the program meets the personnel needs of the various businesses, industries, and professions (i.e., it will provide a suitable number of graduates)	3.78	0.73	8.5	18
Evaluate support services for the proposed program (e.g., library, laboratories/equipment, physical plant, computer facilities)	3.71	0.67	10	17
Provide a balance of faculty interests and student academic needs	3.56	0.86	11	18
Assess present demand for graduates of the proposed program	3.50	0.79	12.5	18

Table AE.6 (continued)

Activity of academic planners	Importance of activity			
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	n
Assess present demand by students (i.e., social demand)	3.50	0.92	12.5	18
Obtain information from professionals in the university's geographic locality	3.47	0.62	14	18
Consider the workload of faculty members	3.33	0.77	15	18
Obtain information from business people in the university's geographic locality	3.28	0.75	16.5	17
Obtain information from public at large	3.28	0.75	16.5	18
Obtain information from provincial government officials	2.67	0.69	18	18
Mean of means*	3.69	0.34	—	—

Notes: 1. The scale for *Importance of criterion* was as follows: 1 = Not at all; 2 = A little; 3 = Moderate importance; 4 = Considerable importance; 5 = Great importance; and 9 = N/O (no opinion).

2. * Mean of means = mean of responses of CHEF members for all 18 questionnaire items.